THE

LIGHT OF TRUTH

— OR —

SIDDHANTA DEEPIKA.

A Monthly Journal, Devoted to Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Science, &c.

Commenced on the Queen's Commemoration Day, 1897.

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King Bhoja's Head-ache.

The myths that have clustered round the personality of the Ancient Hindu King, Bhoja, might only be paralleled in the West by those of King Arthur or Emperor Charlemagne. A great mass of clumsy fugitive stories for whose inception no more adequate reason could be given than the wanton activity of human fancy, were, time out of mind, tacked on to kings and chiefs of no authentic existence. The same miraculous adventures were now and again attributed to individuals of totally different generations, or, as was more frequently the case, legendary occurrences of a contradictory nature become the whole-sale property of a single shadowy king. Thus of Bhoja many stories are told by the old gossips of the Indian village-tree, which are equally believed to apply to the Ujjain Monarch, Vikramaditya. Again, a series of miraculous legends, of practically the same import, though divergent in the form or texture of narration, were attributed to the self-same king. And of this typical nature is the varying versions of King Bhoja's head-ache. A unique mode of its cure resulting in the liberation of a phlegmatic amphibian from cranical immurement was sketched for us in a recent issue of the "Madras Mail." We will now take up for treatment a different version of the head-ache and its cure, interesting alike for the splendid romance and the exquisite folly.

King Bhoja was, like Emperor Julian, an austere man given to the cultivation of stern virtues. Never was there the least swerving from the path of duty and moral rectitude in the days of his golden rule; so much so, he was believed to be helped by the very Devas in his administrative tactics. As in common with other kings of Ancient India, whom Tradition holds to be models of regal piety and philanthropy, he was wont to spend six months of every year in his urban head-quarters looking to his kingly office, and the remainder, in sylvan retreats meditating on the eternal spiritual verities, uncontaminated by the breath of any other man. Thus, he ruled, looked upon by his reverent subjects as a king and philosopher, as a legislator and an ascetic.

One day he returned home from his busy Hall of Justice late in the evening, and lay on his cosy, velvety quilt, quite fagged, fanned by the fair maidens of his harem. He went to sleep apparently fatigued with the day's had work. When he rose at night for his meal after the short slumber, his head was heavy, and Lo! a fit of migraine had seized him. The pain

increased hour after hour, till at last, he smarted under the agonies, and by the next morning he could not even taste his food. In an instant the king's serious indisposition was noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom, and the loyal subjects came flocking to the palace-door, sorrowing and moaning. The king's dormitory was crowded with physicians of first-rate abilities, and none of the thousand and one remedies which they prescribed was able to relieve the God-protected Monarch from the fell complaint. So far from the pain subsiding from the administration of medicines, it was rising by leaps and bounds in intensity. By noon, it reached its climax, the king swooned in the presence of the *kabirajs*, and lay torpid and motionless on his downy bed. As could be expected, the inmates of the palace were panic-stricken to see this unprecedented event, and as a last remedy, a number of Brahmins were ordered to invoke the gods by means of loud prayers for blessing the king with a ready cure. The Brahmins, to show their last act of duty to the dying king, congregated inside the city-temple in pharisaic pomp and standing knee-deep in the tank water hard by, chanted the sonorous vedic hymns. The rich volume of sound issuing from the prayer-offering Brahmins' throats went up piercing the sky. The grand vedic antiphonal assonance pleased the gods, and they heard the Brahmins supplicating in dismal despair. The gods were at once moved by the Brahminic devotion, and they, in turn, requested their chief, Indra himself, to descend to the earth and save the king Bhoja.

Indra mounted in the twinkling of an eye his golden car drawn by horses of cerulean sheen, and with the silver bells of the vehicle chiming delicate notes, dashed athwart the blue vault of the sky. When he neared the earth, he assumed, by an effort of celestial magic the appearance of a Brahmin mendicant, with matted locks, flowing beard and care-worn pinched-up face. Thus impersonating himself, Indra entered the sick-room of the king. In the meantime the physicians in the palace had given the king up for lost, and they were ever watching with sullen discomfiture and bated breath the last moments of a saintly monarch. So, when Indra entered the sick-room, the obdurate attendants there took him for a fanatical wiseacre and stoutly objected to his doing anything that might disturb the king's peace. Withal, he managed by cringing and coaxing to be allowed to treat the king. And yet, there was one more difficulty in his way. The anchorite demanded that none else should be allowed into the sick apartment when he treated the king. And after a good deal of remonstration on his part, and dogged discussion on the part of the physicians and inmates of the palace, the disguised Indra gained his point and was let into the king's chamber alone. He locked the doors of the room fast behind him before he sat by the bedstead of the patient.

In a few minutes the king regained his consciousness, and sat up on his bed, completely cured of his head-ache, while opposite to him stood the mute celestial *Yogi* beaming with superhuman effulgence. A thrill ran through the king's body to see the holy apparition pointing its hand to a fat dead fish lying on the floor. When the king questioned Indra as to how the fish chanced to come there, the sage laughed a good-humoured laugh, and related to him the entire history of his complaint ending with an account of the manner in which the fish was extracted out of the king's brain-box. The sage added that the fish had grown for sometime too big for the capacity of the king's cranium, and with the increase of proportions in the size of the piscine parasite the head-ache became intenser. The king then shrewdly requested the pseudo-hermit to tell him the method that was employed to remove the pate for getting at the fish. The sage began "There is no need of medicament or operation *for the Devas* in such cases, but, *as for mortals*———" when, reflecting suddenly that his inadvertent words had betrayed his genuine nature, vanished out of sight in a haze, leaving the king solitary in the room. Bhoja concluded from the amazing disappearance of the hermit, that his physician was no other than a divine messenger sent by the *Devas* in their overflowing sympathy for him, and rising from the bed ran up to the door-way in eagerness, which he found shut and fastened securely. Unlatching the bolt, he opened the doors ajar and found himself in the open hall, where, his subjects, quite astonished at this miracle of the king's resurrection shouted uproariously with the chorus "May the King Live Long."

V. V. Ramanan.

Some Notes on Tirukkural.

There is a quatrain in Tamil which eulogizes Tirukkural and the commentary thereon of Parimelalagar. The quatrain may be rendered into English as follows:—All milk is not cow's milk: all work is not

Valluvar's work; all commentary thereon is not Parimelalagar's commentary. We do not question this eulogium. But every man has a right to give free expression to his own sentimesnts. There can be no doubt that Parimelalagar is a master-hand, and that his commentary, which has superseded its nine predecessors, is a master-piece. But every man has got his own point of view.

Parimelalagar seems to view Kural through Sanskrit spectacles. There are also those who view it with Christian eyes. We gaze on it with catholic eyes. Man's work is not complete : it is always susceptible of improvement. The indigenous literature of any nation is not complete; it is always susceptible of improvement. We are only beginning to enjoy the blessings of free-trade in commerce. Free-trade in literature was universal from time immemorial; but it was never so widely advocated as in these present enlightened times. Translations and adaptations, mutual exchange and barter enliven the literatures of nations. The Dravidian group of languages and Sanskrit must have affected each other. Sanskrit has been for a very long time a dead language, and scholars scoop out Dravidian elements from Aryan cliffs. One nation does not lose credit by exporting its superfluous products and importing other useful ones. One language loses no merit by borrowing from another. The infusion of fresh blood adds energy and vigour. Currents of water flow with greater life and glow than stagnant pools. A progressive nation cannot but absorb and assimilate foreign materials. A progressive literature cannot but absorb and assimilate foreign thoughts and foreign ideas. Original elements and foreign elements may fuse together and create a new product. This is our point of view. Valluvar was a Tamil scholar. He might have read Sanskrit, or he might have read translations from Sanskrit, or he might have heard discourses in Tamil by Sanskrit scholars. We cannot get ourselves to believe that Kural is a mere compilation from Sanskrit moral codes. Kural is the product of the deep study of man and books. It is not the creation of a mere literary glutton, nor is it the work of observation pure. It is not the fruit of a few days or a few months toil. It is the life-work of Tiruvalluvar. The work is one connected whole with the author's own design and plan binding the parts all together. It is not for us to say that Valluvar echoes others, or the reverse. We only wish to note here two points where we differ from Parimelalagar. Our readers are at liberty to dissent from the opinions expressed here.

1. The first chapter—கடவுள்வாழ்த்து (divine praise) is taken by Parimelalagar and others to be an invocation addressed to God. "According to established rule, all Tamil compositions ought, and, with few exceptions, all do commence with an invocation of the Deity, varying according to the sect of the writer." This invocation is for the work to be completed without hindrance. There is also a kind of invocatoin which is in accordance with the theme undertaken. The invocation in Kural is said to be of the latter sort. Our contention here is that this chapter is not an invocation of any kind of Deity in order that the work may safely reach its end. We say that Tiruvalluvar makes no invocation here.

The first four chapters of Kural form the author's introduction to his work. In the fourth chapter, he emphasises the all-important power of Virtue, before entering upon the First Book of his work, which treats of Virtue. The preceding chapter is allotted to the Greatness of Ascetics, because they are the best fitted to advise the world about Virtue. The second chapter speaks of the Importance of Rain, as without it the world cannot go on. In the first chapter, the author speaks of God —His nature and the good of obeying and praising Him, and does not invoke his aid. The author is desirous in his work to give the clue to salvation. Virtue, Wealth, and Domestic Happiness form the steps of the Stair-case to Heaven. God is the First cause of the Universe, and reaching His Holy Feet is the goal of Man. So the author hints in the first chapter the *summum bonum* of his work. That the author nowhere in this chapter speaks of himself in the first person, nor of God in the second person serves only to strengthen our view of the chapter. It is the faulty apprehension of this chapter which has given rise to many a hot controversy among sectarians. View the chapter with our spectacles and you will find no Aruha or Siva or Vishnu or Brahma moving before your eyes. We may therefore assert that in this chapter Valluvar only speaks of the existence of God and of the way of obtaining His Grace.

2. The Second Book is named பொருட்பால்—the Book on Wealth. Parimelalagar states that wealth comes under and is included in Sovereignty which is the means or instrument of wealth, that Sovereignty is

the administration of a country, and that Valluvar discusses the subject under the headings named Sovereignty, the constituents of Sovereignty, and appendix. We dissent from this view. The author is of opinion that wealth is essential for Virtue and Happiness. An organized country has a king and subjects. Without wealth the king cannot do anything; without wealth the subjects cannot live as men ought to. The king is an ideal king; the subjects are ideal citizens. The king must earn wealth and this is treated in பொருள் செயல்வகை. The subjects must earn wealth, and the best means for them to produce wealth is agriculture—உழவு. In this book the author discusses Sovereignty in all its aspects, and also Citizenship in all its aspects, the central point being the importance of wealth. Chapters 39 to 95 are devoted to Sovereignty and its accessories; chapters 96 to 108 to Citizenship. Citizenship is only an epitome of Royalty. The king will find some hints for himself in the chapters on Citizenship, and the citizens will find some hints for themselves in the chapters on Sovereignty. In திருவள்ளுவமாலை, a collection of panygerics by the scholars of the Madura Academy on Kural, we find that the quatrain No. 25 explains the classification, as made by Valluvar, of the First Book; the quatrain No. 27 that of the Third Book. The quatrain No. 26 by போக்கியார் states the classification of the Second Book (Wealth):—

> அரசியலையைந் தமைச்சிய லீரைந்
> தருவலா ணிரண்டொன் றெண்கூ—ழிருவிய
> றிண்படை நட்புப் பதினேழ் குடிபதின்மூன்
> றெண்பொருளேழா மிவை

that is, அரசியல் (royalty—25), அமைச்சியல் (ministers-10), அரண் (fortification—2), கூழ் (பொருள்செயல்வகை—the way of earning wealth—1), படை (the army--2). நட்பு (friendship—17), and குடியியல் (citizenship—13). Though Parimelalagar adopts the original classification in the other two books, he sets aside the above classification, and has his own in the Second Book. What is குடியியல் in the above classification is ஒழிபியல் for Parimelalagar, and what is குடி in "படை குடிகூழ மைச்சு நட்பரணா றுடையானரசருளேறு" is நாடு by synecdoche. The author must have had some purpose in discussing அரசியல் first, and குடியியல் last, putting the rest in the middle. The wealth of the state and the wealth of the nation, the prosperity of the king and that of his subjects—these are the subject proper of this Book. It cannot really be sovereignty which is of course instrumental in safeguarding wealth. If the author, as stated by Parimelalagar, intended only this to be the subject of the second book, he would not have discussed the essentials of a good citizen, namely, honor, nobility, benevolence, etc., and concluded the book with poverty, begging, and baseness. We have no crusade against the great Parimelalagar. Only in the big harvest of his commentary, he hath missed an ear or two which has fallen for our share to glean.

T. CHELVAKESAVARAYA MOODR., M. A.

The Small-Pox Goddess.

(Continued from Page 284 of Vol. IV).

This, the necessary digression relating to the genesis of *Mâriamman* over, we can now see how the religio-medical treatment is conducted when a patient has fallen ill of pox. Prior to the visible manifestation of the contagion, the would-be patient suffers from a feeling of dull langour and mopish break-down. He does not relish food properly nor does sleep give to his body the required amount of rest and peace. Slowly a fever invades him subjecting him to terrible fits of vomitting. The temperature of the body rises from hour to hour, till at the close of the fever, his head swims and he is invariably in a delirium. In the case of certain patients, the delirium proves itself an unmitigated bane, and the "exoteric" signs of their "astrial experience" will provide wonders even to a special student of mental aberrations. The patient talks gibberish, sometimes a diglot, at other times a triglot, nay, even a polyglot mongrel, made up of unintelligible language and inarticulate sounds, the whole affair enormously terror-striking. Now and then, he starts up from bed with the blood-shot eyes of an inebriate, walks violently about the house, swooning down eventually on some spot, unable to bear the fatigue of his own boisterous exertions. This is the stage of great anxiety to the inmates of the house. After a time, the body of the patient becomes suddenly covered with a crowd of rosy patches which after the subsidence of the fever and the delirium, resolve and develop into pointed eruptions, finally to become the characteristic small-pox pustules. During the pyrexial paroxysms, the patient is believed to be on the eve of the privileged entry into the portals of *Mariamman's* citadel, as the ticket for admission has already been issued to him. He is practically enjoying at the portico the sight of the inestimable doings of Her Supreme Diabolic Majesty's militia. Thus the

bed-ridden wretch is for the time being under the jurisdiction and governance of *Pèchi-A'yi* the head-portress and staff-bearer of *Mâri*.

Here we may pause to note how *Pe'chi* looks, and what rôle she plays in spreading the contagion. She is the chosen commandant in the infernal army of hobgoblins, salamanders and undines that are said to tread on *Mâri's* heel, and hence the right finger of the Small-Pox Goddess. Her face reminds one of that of the Royal Bengal Tiger as it stands surveying all around with a threatening mien, ready to pounce upon any intruder, while at its feet lies the newly-mauled deer, suitable for a rich meal. She puts on a tucker, which only assists to set her formidable-looking pendulous breasts off to greater effect. She is not a young dame by any means, but a blood-curdling shrewish old hag, with the bones of her batterred body prominently showing out, and the coriaceous elephantine skin pinched and shrivelled up, ever on the look-out to dart at any healthy individual, and to lash into his system a great amount of small-pox virus. And nearly nude is she in her narrow strip of cloth round the waist, and with matted and dishevelled hair, and grinning teeth, like Death incarnate, she dances her demoniac dances to the resonant roarings of the hobgoblin bands. It is said that the patient's frightful groans, shrieks and frequent startings from bed to run about in maddened fury, are all occasioned by the fear he conceives from seeing the frantic merry-making and the deafening pandemoniac howls of the hellish brigade.

And naturally enough, the inmates try to do anything and everything in their power according to their lights to alleviate at the present crisis the patient's suffering by making the prescribed offerings to *Pechi*. She is fond of loaves of the pattern of the Jewish *show-bread*, made of the flour-compound of four different kinds of grain, and of some slices of cocoanut kernel, but without salt. So long as the delirium lasts, the offerings are prepared assiduously every evening, and thrown off on the roof of the house with a pity-evoking call upon *Pechi*, to take them away and relieve the sufferer of his soul-tormenting fears. If for all the propitiatory fodder to *Pechi*, the patient in his delirious walkings and violences be beyond measure uncontrollable, and if there also be any possibility of his getting away unawares from the house, during his raging state of unconsciousness, all the doors of the house are well shut and bolted making any attempted exodus after the enforcing *Pechi* impossible. For, it is said by age-worn matrons that, should at this stage he make an exit and *people in the street gaze upon him*, *Mâri* would get trebly ferocious and do away with him altogether.

In a few days the delirious condition cools down, the eruptions become more and more visible and the patient feels day after day the increasing pain all over the body owing to the intense and continuously rising inflammation. Having by this time thoroughly regained his consciousness he smarts under the agonies that prey upon him. The vesicles have grown larger and bigger and the skin has become tense and painful around them. In some cases they may be so thick-set as to leave no room even for a pin-prick. Now and then the miserable sufferer is in a stupor through excess of burning pain. He howls and whines, and often even roars with unutterable rage and despair. To lie on his back would be a difficulty for him, for, all over that region there are enormous pustules. For a similar reason, he cannot repose on his sides, nor on his face. Neither can he sit or squat, nor even stand on his legs. The sole of the foot, the scalp, the interior of the nose and even the white of the eyes are invaded by a multitude of excruciating eruptions. Again, when the pustules have advanced in development, an unbearable itching sensation is felt at every point on the body, in addition to the previous pain and the feeling of burning. Even the most downy quilt will be nothing short of a prickly bed of thorns. The only commiseration for all this he can legitimately expect from his friends and relations, is an address to him now and again as, "*Maham—m—mâyi!* Please don't fret. *Maham—m—mâyi!* Please don't be angry. I beseech you not to trouble the child, I shall present you with an offering of a couple of mud eyes, and I shall give you a cooling, refreshing bath of tender cocoanut water." They mean by such prayers that they will do all in their might to appease the Small Pox Goddess, that she may deign to let the patient alone, without much hurt.

As soon as the state of delirium has passed, and small pinkish vesicles have made thair appearance on the body, the inmates of the house get hold of some of the oldest—nearly always widowed—crones in the village, to diagnose the case properly. These old gossips are credited with a greater experience of eruptive affections like small-pox than even the best European dermatologist, and unless they certify that

it is a distinct case of small-pox, the people in the house may not begin the necessary medico-religious observances enjoined by tradition in the case of small-pox, and small-pox alone. And so the old women with their shrivelled-up skin, toothless mouth and white-hooded face, who are a hideous spectacle by themselves, crowd round the bed-stead of the patient in the early morning, remove the sheets off his body, and start an inspection of the eruptions on it. Meantime the patient is crying aloud unable to endure the agonies, and after deep deliberation the women unanimously pass the verdict, " It is a case of Maha-Mâyi. She has strewn her pearls richly. Put up a ' Pot ' in a separate room and invite her."

The ceremonial of praying to Mâri to come to an appointed room of the house, and of inducing her by entreaties to linger there till the inmates give her submissive leave to repair elsewhere, is very interesting.

A battered and bruised big brass-pot, of antediluvian appearance, the outcome of indigenous industry, is chosen, and filled with water it is left in a room that may be temporarily set apart in order to invoke *Mâriamman* for consultation and advice on various points in connection with her specialty. The mouth of the pot is plugged with a bunch of margosa leaves which, in turn, is surmounted by a husked cocoanut with the " Kudumi " not torn off. The ground immediately in front of the sacred pot is converted into an altar for *Mâri*, on which will be found displayed to view, all the various things supposed to be her pet food. We can expect to find a handful of a peculiar preparation of roasted rice, known in Tamil as " Aval," a bottle of cocoanut-toddy, some cigars, and a few young cocoanuts of big size with a portion of the greenish rind chipped off. For, we must remember that whatever may be her savage or barbaric look, in point of smoking or drinking she is inferior to no fashionable of this dawn of the Twentieth Century. She is not a member of any "Temperance Association" or " Temperance League," and teetotalers in her opinion are a set of inane noodles. We may also find on the altar, a large quantity of ' cold rice' soaked in a liquid that is in an advanced stage of fermentation. The most aged woman available in the house takes charge of the room and its contents, and the various ceremonies she has to perform as *Mâri's* officiating priestess *pro tempore*. Every morning all the old offerings are removed and new ones are put in their place ; the former are given away to Sûdra menials and to Brâhmin boys that may chance to visit the house. Here, before detailing the way in which the old offerings are doled out, we must pause to note an important fact which accounts for more small-pox patients among Hindus than among Europeans.

The European nations avoid the contagion by dreading and fleeing from it, while the Hindu courts it from the superstitious fear that he provokes the wrath of ' Mâri ' in case he does not willingly place himself under her ' merciful sway,' when there is an opportunity. The small-pox may be raging in a village and may be carrying off men and women as victims in large numbers, yet the Hindu will hardly dare to hear any advice coming from a sanitary or vaccination inspector as to the ready means of keeping it in check. Instances are not uncommon when a vaccination inspector visits a village with his ' lymph ' and ' lancet,' while the Brâhmans try to send him away with bribes. They do not want the Englishmen's ' false-pearls,' for to see counterfeit things smuggled into her port will excite ***Mâri*** to greater anger and she may " play away " then with the population only too heartily. Such is the belief of the orthodox villager towards vaccination.

Now to go back to our skinny, ugly ' priestess.' She rises quite early in the morning, goes to a tank in the vicinity, bathes and returns home with a narrow-necked brass-pot filled with the tank-water. As she is coming, she may not even touch or speak to others, such is the scantimony that attaches to her clothes, soaked through and through with water, and clings to her weather-worn pinched-up constitution, when once she akes upon herself the onerous office of the priestess at *Mâri's* shrine. Nobody could even think of going near her lest the holy air investing her body should get vitiated. As soon as she comes home, she casts off her wet garments and puts on dry clothes that were kept in a lonely spot beyond the polluting reach of any other human being. After wearing her garments, she begins a course of mock-begging at the houses in the street, demanding from their inmates in the name of *Mâri* " measures of pearl." In each house, they present her with ' cold rice' in great ceremonial austerity. And her begging bowl which is generally of large capacity is brimful before she returns to the infected roof from her trip. Then she enters the room of ' sanctum' in the house, empties the water that was put the previous day from the brass-pot, and replenishes it with the tank-water

newly brought at dawn. Afterwards, all the old offerings on the altar are removed, and new ones are substituted in their place. Thus, the old "cold-rice" is taken away and the new "cold-rice" eked out by "begging" is thrust in its stead. The old cocoanuts are removed and fresher ones are brought in.

Meantime crowds of children and boys are making their appearance into the infected house at the especial request of their parents that *Mâri* might condescend to come down and "play." These members sit at *Chota-Hazri* in the house, when the old "cold-rice" that stood at the altar as an offering is served to them that they may eat the small-pox "pearls." One belief is that each grain of the "cold-rice" is a "pearl" of *Mâri*, and their consuming the food will be instrumental in bringing about a mild invasion of pox. And the old water of the brass-pot is also dashed on the body of these innocents, as it is thought that it is nothing short of the holy "purulent matter" of the small-pox pustule. Some of the younger boys are brought near the bedstead of the patient that they may readily receive "the grace of *Mâri*." Under these conditions it is easily understood how Hindus manage to victimise themselves on Her infernal altar. This self-hurling into the pit of Death is no better than the Moabite habit of burning, rather roasting, children alive to appease the grim, blood-thirsty Moloch. The other offerings are dispensed to Sudras saving the unhusked tender cocoanuts which are used as the main drink of the patient in the hot afternoons. The remnants of the previous day's offering of the gently sour "cold-rice" and cold-rice-water are the food upon which he may be chiefly said to subsist.

One thing to remark in this connection is that in the case of small-pox, even though there might be a slow fever present, the patient's regimen contravenes out and out the normal dietary in ordinary cases of fever. In fact, the cold-rice and fruits which are invariably given to the patient would be the last thing to be recommended to him when he is ordinarily afflicted with febrile symptoms. Thus people fear more Mâri's dictates, than even the demands of temporal hygiene.

The pain of the patient increases with the ascent of the sun in the heavens, and the burning and itching are aggravated a good deal in the hot afternoons by the noisome flies which flit about buzzingly on the body of the patient attracted by the foetor exhaled by his suppurating pustules. To allay this itching sensation the "priestess" sits by the bed of *Mâri's* "chosen subject," and gently passes again and again a bunch of margosa leaves she holds in her hand over the patient's body. This operation she may be engaged in, night and day. It has the double advantage of driving off the flies and relieving the unbearable itch. A fan of palm-leaf is also used occasionally. But the Neem is the special badge of Mâris' Service and it should be used unceasingly. No English medicines, however effective in doing good at this stage, can be permitted. They will merely say that they are not approved by Mâri's diabolic legislation, and their use may end with the unappeasable wrath of Mâri and the summary penalty of malformation of the limbs, disfigurement of the body, or death. Bananas are commonly given to eat, cocoanut-water for drinking and "cold-rice" as food.

Days elapse in this fashion with the above monotonous in-door ceremonies when the pustules gradually "blacken" and "wither" from the region of the head downwards. The out-door religious ceremonies at this time have to do with the propitiatory acts at the temple of *Mâriamman* situated amidst the "Grâma-Devatas" of the village on the roadside or elsewhere. We have further certain religious rules restricting the sort of men and women that can be admitted into the infected house and governing the method of cooking to be adopted. These we will presently consider *seriatim*.

Readers of Walter Pater may well remember his observations in "Marius the Epicurean" on the priesthood of Aesculapius, and the value of dreams thought to be inspired by the God of Medicine, in supplying information about the origin and development of diseases. If among the ancient Romans, dreams were the sole channel for ascertaining the mode of treatment of a particular disease, the symbology of clinical discipline was most effectively mirrored in the look and appurtenances of Aesculapius, the cure of ailments was more religious than medical: not less so, have been the ruling Dravidian practices in relation to the treatment of many contagious diseases over which demonalatory holds such unbounded sway: only in place of the Roman dreams, we have put in the Hindu delirious ravings.

We have referred already to the unmeaning gabble, sometimes positively frightful, that proceed from the patient, during the stage of the delirium coming on straightway in the wake of the eruptive fever, in

ninety cases out of a hundred. The sufferer lives and moves and has his being in a world of his own, thoroughly oblivious of what is passing on about him, and talks of things which will be palpable perhaps only to a deranged imagination fired with the excitement of a high fever. His incoherent talk interlarded with groans and shrieks, is a Chinese puzzle to his relations that sit hard by, endeavouring to read a meaning out of his flippant words. He is Mâri's oracle, and ought to be listened to with abiding reverence and interest, as every unmeaning syllable of his, might veil some sober truth or premonition, having a direct bearing upon the prognosis of the complaint, and afford a clue to the extent of the spread of the contagion, and the range of mortality from it in the village. Many women who pose, by reason of their past experience, as experts in interpreting oracular effusions, sit near him, and cross him with subtle questions. *Mâri*, they say, speaks through him for the time, and true and trained interpreters could make out her intentions easily. Queries like these are put to him, " How many houses you propose to visit? Where do you come from? What time you will stop in our place? How many deaths there might be at the village?" Then many a time Hamilton's well-worn definition of Metaphysics said to have been given by a farmer with his bland flatness, is borne out to a letter, and every one becomes an authoritative expounder of mystic and recondite divinations. In a few cases, what looks like a relevant answer will be obtained though it may not have a shadow of truth in it. The meaning one should attach to such show of relevancy gets clear if we know the secret of how to prolong the somnoloquism of a dreamer by throwing out " a suggestion " as they technically say, or suitable ideas to keep up and develop the train of fancy passing in through dreamer's mind. Similarly, the highly-strung imagination of a disorderly mind, as that of the patient, could be made occasionally to run in the desired groove by repeated clever questionings.

As the patient is groaning under the ill-starred roof, to the dismay and despair of his anxious relations, the good man of the house has already converted the temple of *Mâri* situated on the roadside, or elsewhere in the vicinity, into a scene of the most pious devotion. The gruesome severity of the Goddess is a great deal enhanced by the crumbling exterior and the haunted look of the temple and the sullenness, nay, the appalling nature of the ceremonies conducted there. The temple is not a piece of elaborate architecture or costly masonry, but a simple tile-roofed building, without even the outer court or the imposing, " Portico," if we may use the expression, of the ordinary Hindu Pagoda. The dearth of any vegetation round the temple, the grim colossal idol of *Pechi* at the gate-way, the altar of red brick-work in the open in front, usually breast-high, bearing a large, dark, iron trident that has been bedaubed many a time with the blood of immolated goats and fowls, all these combine to create in the Hindu's mind an awe which rises in intensity with the intensity of devastation in the village, during the reign of the fell epidemic, and which assumes an almost superphysical aspect to the quailing devotee, as he sees the solitary temple in the scorching glare of the cruel Indian summer. At the expense of the infected house, the priest of the temple called *Pujari or Pandâram*, starts a new routine of devotional acts. In the morning, an elaborate *Archana* is made consisting of the offering of flowers of different hues and varied fragrance; camphor and frank-incense are burnt, whose fumes filling the temple-house with an unutterable odour of sanctimony and divine grace, known sometimes to *translate* the souls of votaries; and "holy ashes" scrupulously prepared by complicated processes of sieving and sifting are offered at the feet of the granitoid image, with the mumbling of incantations. The ashes are brought to the house as a matutinal charm, and they are smeared over the forehead of the patient and sprinkled into his mouth, in order to stave off virulence of the contagion to any bad degree.

At noon, the ground adjoining the temple is carefully watered on all sides by special coolies employed for the purpose that the mind of the Goddess may grow "cool." The idol also is frequently bathed in a mixture of milk, honey and clarified butter. The water of many tender cocoanuts is used at intervals as an intermediate ablution. Such propitiatory acts relieve the mind of the inmates of the house, a great deal, of the panic of any further suffering or molestation from *Mâri*, since they, it is thought, will tend to lessen the burning sensation and the itch, so incidental to the contagion, in the scorching and sultry afternoons which are a special feature of the Small-pox season in South India.

As the day wanes, and nightfall commences, the round of ceremonies conducted in the morning is again repeated at the temple, and the " holy" offering

of ashes is sent to the house as "the precious Gift" for the use of the patient. The routine of the "extraordinary" temple-service will continue, so long as the pustules go on actively developing when the pain is intense and smarting unbearable.

In bad types of small-pox, through the intensity of the invasion, and the multitude of pustules that plague the sufferer, cataract in the eye is brought on now and again, and sometimes even distortion of the body, telling upon the gait and the erect posture. When the inmates entertain the faintest suspicion from symptoms that are already manifest, that such deformities might occur, they pray to the Goddess that they would present her with votive offerings of mud eyes, mud legs and so on, should the deformities be averted. It is such presents, the result of vows, that catch first and foremost the gaze of the beholder, as he is brought face to face, for the first time, with any Mâriamman temple. The accumulated mud-offerings of years, many of which in a rapid state of decay, may be seen crowded together unceremoniously in front of the temple, not to mention the images of men and women of baked mud, standing as so many servitors of the Goddess in hideous array.

Another vow taken in given-up cases of Small-pox is to give "a dance" in her honour, which is peculiar, and must be undertaken only by a special set of Sudra men and women, who form professional companies, and who could be engaged for payment. It is only during the time of the annual festival of the Goddess that such a dance ought to be celebrated. As the dance is an institution playing a very important part in the social life of every South Indian village, it will not be out of place here to give a brief account as to how it is conducted, and what the nature and status of the performers are.

The dancing companies are itinerant and make a living by undertaking "dances" for people who have taken dance-vows to the Goddess. Men and women, boys and girls, from among the low ranks of the Sudra community contribute to their number, and the women that join such companies are notably of low morals. They combine with their dance a rude mode of opera-like acting, singing snatches of wild ballads, doggerels, and bazaar-lyrics which are in the mouth of every Indian beggar, street organ-grinder, cart-driver, and jutka-wallah, exuberant with much of animal spirits. The inmates have appointed in their vow a particular annual festival of the Goddess to fulfil their promise. The annual festival runs to as much as even a month in some villages, and a day out of it, is chosen for making good the vow. The priest of the temple is given notice of the fact on that day, so that he may arrange to take the idol in procession round the streets in the evening and bring it to the desired house at night. Meanwhile, the manager of a dancing company specially stopping in the village on account of the festival season is sent for, and on the terms being settled is asked to come with his retinue and the requisite furnishings soon after the idol reaches the house, which will generally be at 8 P.M. Before this, a large shed will have already been erected in front of the house in view of the intended reception to the Goddess and the forthcoming dance in her honour.

At one end of the shed, the fully decked wooden image of the Goddess, which is usually varnished with a thick red shiny paint, is seated in great pomp after the procession has been gone through. All the people of the street assemble there and prostrate themselves before the image and indulge in every pious justiculation. The dance which is invariably conducted in the presence of the image is supposed to be witnessed and enjoyed by the Goddess "unseen by man." Though t is usual to begin the dance as soon as the idol reaches the house, yet, if it is an early hour, they sometimes put it off till it is as late as ten or eleven P. M. By the time the dance will commence, all the people in the street are ready after their supper for the coming recreation, munching their betel-nut, and assembling under the *pandal* with screams and laughter to witness the interesting performance. The clouty population of Sudra menials with their stolid sons and daughters who make up the greater part of the sight-seers on the occasion, grace the assembly not a little.

The pit, the stage, and the tiring room are all one and the same. The mud-covered floor under the *pandal* affords enough room for the various functions of the actors and spectators. Nothing is screened off from view as there is hardly any need for the actors to change apparel or trappings. Each actor comes dressed once for all in tawdry native costumes, pleasing to the crowd, with head-gear and the rest made of ordinary wood, coloured varnish, plaster and tinsel. The same might be said of the actresses also who probably put more paint on their face. Any scene, nay any situation is improvised with the readiness and rustic simplicity of the proverbial fairy-acting in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Now, the sound of the weird bag pipe begins to roll

on the air making a mewing music, while the sickening thirds on the tabor keep time and the clamorous cymbals gingle incessantly. Big shallow-bottomed *chatties* filled with oil (not the petrolium by any means!) are fixed on tall posts. Thick wicks knotted and twisted, of the size of one's knuckles are immersed in the oil and lighted. These primitive lamps which are placed two on each side of the "Boards" do duty for the costly appliances used in the English dancing-hall.

After the preliminary flourish of "mewing" and "thudding," an actor appears on the scene whom the audience is presumed to take for a king of the old Heroic period of the Mahabharat. His queen joins him presently, her face rippling with smiles. Both sing songs and crack jokes. A Prime Minister and a Clown appear by and bye. All these mix together and exhibit to the audience some pantomime, a few attempts at coarse repartees, some snatches of libidious love songs, a few gallant-like acts. There is deafening vocal music now and then, and ample demonstration of provincial slang in language and manners. In fact the ludicrous attitudes and gestures which actors and actressses put on, the drollery twinkling in their eye, the clownish nature of their behaviour and deportment, the tones, now drolling, now gurgling in which they carry on their conversation, abounding in fantastic quips and jokes, all these beggar description. Thus the hours wear on till it is almost day-break, when the play closes, the actors are paid by the goodman of the house, and the Goddess, after the inmates have taken leave of her in the usual style, by burning camphor and frank-incense and "offering" betel-nut, repairs to her temple-home on the shoulders of the men who are appointed to carry her.

The above description will give a fair idea of the so-called "dance-vows" for *Mari Amman*, taken by the inmates of the house, when they have reason to despair of the life of the patient from any alarming symptoms. But one of the most prominent of the rites that is undertaken in the house during the patient's agonies, as the vesicles are advancing in development is the costly dispensing of rice-gruel to the Sudra menials in the village.

A large quantity of rice, even as many as *four or five markals* at times, mixed with *dhol*, pieces of tender cocoanut kernel, salt and abundant water is boiled down to a very liquid sort of savoury *Kanji* and distributed to numerous Sudra people including young children, on sultry noons. This treat is repeated every second or third day till the pustules "blacken," shrivel and tend to slough. The recipients swallow the gruel with keen zest, soliciting loudly, as they do so, "the gracious company of the sweet-Goddess," *i.e.*, an invasion of small-pox that would be mild and not painful. The *Kanji* being a gift dispensed to honour the presence of the Goddess, it is supposed that those who partake of it will surely have an attack of pox, but never of a fatal or dangerous nature as they voluntarily implore her "to set her seal" on them. Though the distribution of *Kanji* is believed to be a means of pacifying *Mari*, the deafening noise the menials make as they crowd at the street-door to partake of the distribution never fails to annoy a good deal the woeful sufferer within. So much so, that during the performance of the *Kanji*-dispensing ceremony, the patient oftentimes imagines it were better he was left alone than subjected to the inflection of such horrid yells from the people at the irritating mid-day.

The restrictions observed in regard to the admission of people into the infected house are varied and must be closely looked into. Enthusiasts possessed of "Indo-mania" may try to read the inculcation of the best principles of the most approved modern hygiene under those restrictions. But one who studies the facts with dispassionate judgment and unbiassed reason, will best be able to judge whether hygiene any more than steps to stave off further progress of the contagion, is ever contemplated under the mask of such time-honoured injunctions. Now, what are the actual restrictions obtaining under the infected roof? A pure virgin, a wife, that did not enter into sexual relations with her husband the previous night, a bachelor of unsullied morals, a married man that "knew" not his bride within the past 12 hours, and all widowers and widows of no loose character might go into the sick room and visit the patient. One that has had a recent shave or an "oil-bath," a maiden or woman using scented cosmetics or "painted with saffron" will never be allowed to reach the bedside of the patient, not one who had just returned from any outstation. Even parents are never permitted to see their child should they chance to come from any outside place, however much they may anxiously yearn. The son will probably have taken pox whilst stopping in a town whither he may have been sent on some purpose by his parents, and they will have come from their home in great flurry, on an urgent

message, extremely eager to see their darling; yet they could never be allowed entry into the house, immediately after their arrival. They ought to stop elsewhere in the town for a day or two, and after a sufficient lapse of time, ranging from 2 to 5 days according to circumstances may get admission into the infected house. The inmates should be free from all ideas of "wedded-life" till the Goddess "goes out of the house; if they are not, they would quit the house altogether. The entry or retention of people happening to be of a different description from the above, is sure, it is thought, to kindle the rage of the imperious and sulky divinity; as a consequence, the patient might suffer enormously from the pangs of the disease, if the Godess in her anger is so forgiving as not to make away with him. The malformations and the deformities incidental to patients emerging out of a bad attack such as blindness, lameness and other disfiguring distortions and even occasional paralysis are nothing else than punishments inflicted by *Mari* for violating her dictates.

Again, within the house itself no tasteful toilet or gay decoration is permitted. There should not be any loud outburst of laughter, nay, any indication of merriment, and everything ought to be grave-looking without even a shadow of light-heartedness. They are not to hold a sumptuous banquet inviting friends and relations, and are further strictly prohibited from preparing any dish involving frying. The use of sesamum or cocoanut-oil for culinary purposes is discountenanced, not to mention its service during bath or toilet. But in their stead, castor-oil or ghee can be used with perfect immunity. If the patient was married, his bride, should quit the house and live away from it till "the Goddess left the house." Any slight infringement from these rules may result in something dismally injurious to the sufferer.

Tradition has it that the small-pox patient should on no account be allowed to travel, for *Mahamayi* will little brook any default on the part of her conscript in that direction. And mention must also be made of the widespread belief that there could be no worse crime under the Sun, putting an affront upon the Goddess' legislation, than the patient's shifting to his bride's house. The fate of the sufferer will then be almost sealed, and the virulence and magnitude of the attack will pass conception. But, according to some high priests of demonolatry, who might outdo Jesuits in casuistry and hair-splitting explanations the degree of penalty will lessen with individual circumstances of extenuation. Thus, differences are contemplated between the patient who repaired to the residence of his spouse of his own free will, and the patient who was removed to his bride's house without his consciousness or will, by his friends or relations, between the sufferer who was tarrying at his father-in-law's residence when casually overtaken by the disease, and the sufferer who reached his father-in-law's house after the symptoms were once patent upon his body.

We may presume for the sake of our present account that the patient has not transgressed any of the recognised enactments of *Mari*. At the point we have now reached, the stage of unconscious raving will certainly have passed away. The stage that succeeds it is far worse. Consciousness has become thoroughly restored only to make him doubly alive to the inflammatory pain all over his body. As has been already pointed out, he cannot rest easily in any posture. Even the calls of nature can never be attended to without the assistance of somebody. The midnight hours become the most painful and dreary. The company of relations and friends which was perhaps, in a measure, a source of diversion during the day is refused to him then. Thus, the solitude of the midnight added on to his natural sleeplessness, harrows him, giving him ample leisure to fume over his mordant pain. In a few days, the pain lessens, although, an unexpected sensation of unbearable itch is ushered in step by step The remedies usually employed to allay it have already been dwelt upon at sufficient length. Suffice it to say here, that when the itch is at its climax, a stage from which the small-pox sufferer can reasonably look forward to certain recovery, he loses control over himself, and scratches his body, especially the face so heartily, that nothing short of bleeding happens in many instances. The fittings which âre so conspicuous a feature in small-pox stricken people are due to the inordinate scratching under such tempting Odds. But as a mechanical preventive against the disfiguring mischief of the fingers the patient's hands are now and then muffled with pads of rags. In the face of such precautions, it is not uncommon to find patients emerging out of the attack, woefully pockpitten. Again, on those pustules that have been scratched to a bad depth, and which might turn out thereby fresh seats of inflammation and irritation, it is usual to apply as a medicament

tender *neem* leaves brayed to a pulp. But, whether this method of treating is altogether free from objection according to the healing art of the West, this is not the place for us to discuss. As the belief goes, no better doctoring could be devised under the circumstances to assist the patient looking to the fact that he is, for all intents and purposes, entirely at the mercy of *Mâri*.

By degrees, the feeling of itch gets more and more tolerable, and the patient's appetite, which was hitherto at a low ebb, improves fairly. The fat vesicles have in the meantime shrunk in size and are at next door to "withering." The patient is also able to divert himself by conversation with his visitor and thinks that after all life is worth living. Such signs lead his relations to conclude that the time has come when they might think of the necessary post-clinical "bath." All the old matrons in the street are specially invited to pronounce their opinion whether the sufferer is fit for the "bath" or it should be put off till after sometime. If they should concur in believing that the day has come, a day for the "bath" is appointed, and a thanks-giving prayers is offered to *Mari* seeking submissively her leave for the intended "bath."

We must note, in passing, that the Tamil-speaking people of Southern India recognise various types of small-pox, differentiating them by the duration of the invasion, the acuteness of the suffering, and the shape and the number of the pustules. One form is known in Tamil as "*Panai-Yéri*" (Palm-climber), another, "*Manal-Vâri*" (Sand-heaper), and so on. The former is so designated from the circumstance that the pustules first develop from the foot up, then shivel from the head down, again fatten from the foot forwards, and so on in succession. This rhythmic rising and falling in the size of the vesicles from 'toe to top' and *vice versa*, have probably suggested to the people's mind the idea of the 'Palm-climber' or the proverbial toddy-drawer or *Shânân*. A similar explanation would apply to the *Manal-vâri* type. In this case, the pustules are comparatively small, but very numerous, so much so, the collection resembles a heap of large grains of sand dashed on the body. Other types are not wanting in which the vesicles are arranged in the form of a bunch of grapes or run into one another so as to become large-sized pustules enclosing enormous purulent matter. These are known to both Hindus and Europeans, who have devised names for them in conformity with the genius of their respective languages. For instance, the meaning of the opposite English word *Corymbose* as applied to a type of small-pox will be patent to every well-informed student of the tongue.

No doubt, the main event paving the way for the patient's post-clinical "bath" is the shrinking of the pustules from head to foot. In fact, even if the shrinking should have proceeded only so far down as the chest, the people are satisfied and are not afraid of voting for the patient's "bath." As the "bath" is peculiar in many ways, we must linger a while here to make out the interesting features under this item.

By the day of the "bath," our patient will have hardly attained to that level of health which could impart to him strength sufficient to move about or which could enable him to sit on his hams. He is lifted bodily, therefore, by his nursing relations and gently placed in the "court-yard" where his bathing usually takes place. One or two members hold him in a squatting attitude, when the delightfully warm water is drizzling on his head. The water that is thus used should have been moderately heated with plenty of *neem* leaves and chopped slices of saffron. Some grains of *omam* (country-wort) are also pounded and put into it. Thus, when it is in a fit condition to be used for the bath, it will be a sort of weak decoction of *neem* leaves and saffron, flavoured also with *omam*. This bathing lotion, if we may so style it, is believed to be prepared from a special *recipe* given by *Mâri*, in her overflowing mercy for her wretched children on earth. It is quite probable that the bath has also some antiseptic properties. Nine or ten average-sized pitchers of the water, so carefully prepared, are gently poured on the body of the patient, the withered pustules being softly rubbed in the meanwhile with a tender bunch of *neem* leaves by a special woman that attends to the work. At the close of the bath, his body is cautiously wiped from head to foot by means of soft, thread-bare rags, cushion-like to touch by women who are supposed to be skilled in the business. The moisture on the body is thus taken away with hardly any trouble to the patient, who is, next, taken to a roomy spot in the house and left to recline at full length. He is then supplied with meal prepared in strict accordance with the rules of regimen prescribed for the present stage, about which we shall have occasion to speak presently.

The next bath comes off after the lapse of three or four days. It is different from the preceding in that

oil is introduced in it as an emollient application for the first time after the attack of small-pox. The fact is well known that in ordinary instances of the so-called "oil-bath," the native of the Tamil districts rubs himself, to begin with, with a large quantity of sesamum oil, and washes himself, afterwards, tolerably clean of the anointment by a judicious use of the "oil cake" of *Bassia longifollia* or of the ground legumes of *Acacia concinna*. Although the second bath in question might, for courtesy's sake, be designated an "oil-bath," we should not fail to notice that the usual sesamum oil will never be employed in it, as being prohibited by Mâri's dictates. Castor-oil is therefore substituted in the place of the ordinary hair wash. Just as in the case of the first bath, the patient is held in a squatting position by a female member of the family, while a second person gently applies castor-oil to his head, the locks on which have become badly matted through neglect of dressing during the disease. The body also is bedaubed profusely with the oil. Brayed *Phaseolus mungo* is then cautiously rubbed, with a goodly quantity of tepid water, on his head and body, in order to remove the oil. Lukewarm water is next poured on him as a bath. A soft tattered towel is brought in, wherewith the last drops of water that might remain on his body are removed. His diet awaits him with scrupulous punctuality the moment he is out of this elaborate bathing, and, after his breakfast is over, he is left to lie down and sleep. The castor-oil 'wash' is repeated once in every three or four days, till, by degrees, the rules slacken, and the usual sesamum oil is used without objection, even before *Mâri* is "taken leave of."

A word or two is here necessary about the patient's dietary during the period covered by these religio-medical baths. Being considered to be affected with a wasting disease, he is fed with very nutritious food. Curds and *ghee* are given in lavish abundance. Chilly is invariably avoided. As a substitute for this ordinary curry-stuff of the Hindu Cookery, pepper is used in the preparations meant for the patient's consumption. Meals are given to him many times a day to make up, as it were, for his lost strength and vigour. The recovering patient is also, to be true to facts, a ravenous eater. And he digests well at the same time, being possessed after the attack of a good and untiring stomach. We must remember again that when the ordinary sesamum oil is begun to be used as a hair-wash, the eating of cold rice in the early morning, mixed with a large quantity of creamy curds, is recommended, nay, enforced in the case of the patient. But he only hails at the idea. For, the diet is more than palatable to him, and he enjoys it with no inconsiderable zest. Such is the supreme and enviable quality of the appetite the disease blesses him with, for sometime at any rate after its expiry. It is quite a common thing to find people after an attack of small-pox, growing much bulkier and fatter, bulkier and fatter indeed than what they were like, before the attack.

The people in the house will not pitch upon a time "to give the Goddess leave" so soon as the patient would wish for, for more than one reason. When once he has picked up sufficient strength to walk about, he is naturally desirous to go out of the house, and to mix with people in the street, from whom he has been cut off for so long a time. The domestic immurement is too much for him. But under hardly any circumstances will he be permitted to get away, if the Goddess has not been previously "taken leave of." For another thing, the Goddess should not be sent out, unless she had shown to the inmates a willingness to retire to her home or to roam elsewhere. There might be, for instance, other members of the family under the infected roof, without any visitation, and, thus, in anticipation of further attacks on such of them, the inmates wait for a fairly long period, ranging usually from 20 to 30 days, after the complete recovery of the patient, before thinking of "sending Her home." It is supposed that the ten days preceding and succeeding the New Moon are the most favourable, or, rather, likely days for a 'fresh sport' of hers, with any others, in the patient's house. The inmates take care, therefore, to prolong the interim, between the recovery of the patient and the ceremony of "sending Her home," as much as possible, lest otherwise they should incur the severe displeasure of the surly Goddess, ending, perhaps, in the wholesale death of the entire family. The popular belief is very strong on this point, and every endeavour will, as a consequence, be unflinchingly made, to give the Goddess full opportunity "to play herself out" with such inmates of the house as she has either failed, or did not find time hitherto to "sport with." This tiresome interim, the unfortunate patient will have to count as an age, since strict watch will be maintained over him to see that he

does not stir anywhere beyond the four walls of the house. In a word, he will never be permitted to step outside the threshold of his house under any contingency whatever, for fear of fretting the Goddess by making a *public* exhibition of her " robe of pearls," which she, in her extreme grace, has seen it fit " to deck him with." The public ought not to gaze upon him when he has not yet doffed her costly and handsome " robe of pearls" given to him by *Mâri* for a short wear, and that, in *private*. When the pustules have sloughed and shrunk in, and the scabs have pared off, when nothing but black circular marks dots the body of the patient, as the outcome of the attack, *Mâri* may be said to have taken off her " robe" and not till then. We may well nigh call, therefore, the above interim as one of real incarceration for our poor patient, both literally and metaphorically.

On the day of giving the Goddess final leave " to go out to roam after Her own sweet will," a grand feast is organised in her name to which relatives and friends are invited. An old widow is specially "hired" to discharge the onerous duty of impersonating *Mâri* on that day, in connection with some ceremonies in which her " function" plays a paramount part. Being thought to be the vicegerent of *Mâri* for the time, she is requested to partake of the sumptuous feast before others, as a mark of honour and respect. Whatever the widow does, is believed to be inspired by *Mâri* herself. After her meal is over. she is presented with a lot of cakes prepared for the occasion, fruits and other edibles, not to mention a few silver coins, all of which she takes in a long piece of cloth, and ties it round her belly. Holding in one of her hands a large bunch of *neem* leaves, and in the other, some " sacred ashes" taken from the altar of *Mâri* maintained in the house, and rearing herself to her full height, she approaches the patient, who is ready for the ceremony after the " farewell bath " in the morning, and blesses him by wafting the bunch over his head three times, and by rubbing the ashes on his forehead. Then, without uttering a word, and with the bunch of *neem* leaves and the sacred ashes held steadily in her hands, she suddenly rushes out of the house and proceeds in a southerly direction " at the pace of a running bullock." The rule is that she should not allow herself to be seen in this state by any one in the street ; and for this reason she dashes back to her house in great flurry and dresses herself anew in her usual way. Such a widow officiating at the " leave taking ceremony of *Mâri* " is not easily procurable, it being a prevalent idea that only the cast-aways among Brahmin widows are fit to discharge the " fiendish duty." Be it remarked in this connection that the widow should eat only in that room wherein the Goddess has been invoked and worshipped, since the date of her advent in the house.

Towards the evening of that day, the offering-contents of the room are all scrupulously collected : the " eatable" portion of which being presented to the Sudra menials waiting for the Goddess' last "leavings," and the remaining debris, comprising amongst the rest heaps of *neem* leaves, being thrown away carefully in a far-off tank. From that day onward, the inmates resume their " usual" customs and social practices which, till then, they had to hold in abeyance, to suit themselves to new needs.

Although the Goddess might thus be formally sent out of the house, the recovering patient would hardly be allowed for six more months to go out freely or attend to his avocations. The gaze of a large body of people should, by all means, be shunned. Apart from the provocation of the Goddess, there is the blighting influence of " evil eye" to which he will become subject, should he unsuspectingly mingle with his neighbours or others in the village. " Evil eye," the belief runs, if cast upon the body of a man recovering from small-pox or its after-effects, would bring on a repetition of the attack, ending in the unerring mortality of the individual. This reversion is technically called in Tamil parlance, *marukoor*, meaning " next puncture."

The stage of the after-effects of small-pox might appropriately detain us now. The relatives of the patient tend him with the utmost care during the six months following the formal " sending away" of the Goddess. Mention has already been made of the rising appetite of the paient, and the commensurate diligence with which the inmates look after him in the matter of his diet, which is religiously constant in quality all the time. The meals are rich and nourishing and repeated in many cases even as often as six times a day. The scabs pare off in great numbers from the seat of the dying pustules, and fall on the floor, furnishing a rich feast to ants which crowd round the place attracted by the smell. More often than not, the patient himself is found busy peeling away the scabs, even before they are ready to fall off of their own

accord, as, presumably, this kind of occupation is delightful to him. If the attack was great or violent, there also occurs day after day an epidermal ecdysis; so much so, the skin of the body including that of the palm and the sole, becomes excessively tender, and over-sensitive to heat and cold. As a consequence, walking in the open with unprotected feet will be nothing short of a feat, be it on rugged ground in the shade, or on soft and humid earth in the sun. Nay, very often, shoes, if made of ordinary leather, would seem hard and pinching for the sole. Under such circumstances, the patient will not for a moment think of taking a walk, though it be only for a brief distance, nor of handling energetically any heavy tool or implement. The most tepid substance has an exaggerated heat for his palm Bearing in mind this singular defect, the inmates of the house see that the food he eats is served to him, deplete of all warmth.

It is not at all surprising therefore that the Hindus should have made it a point not to allow the patient to indulge hardy walking, nor give him any work involving exposure to the sun. He is scarcely asked to do anything else, save to sit quiet, and eat nourishing food as many times a day as his system requires. He is also recommended to have a cold plunging bath every morning, on the ground that it has cooling, tonic properties, and that he also could better endure cold than heat, during his severe 'moulting' stage. The special rules that regulate the daily life of the patient for these six months, enjoining strict inaction and inordinate fattening, bespeak liberally the dreadful idea Hindus have formed, time out of mind, of the wasting nature of small-pox. As the Tamil people say, considering no doubt the scrupulous attention to his rich convenience, with which the small-pox patient is looked after during the after-effects, "It is indeed an enviable thing to be a solvent patient of *Mâri*"!

The Tamils have long ago invented a method of 'propagation by cutting" for inducing the epidemic in persons who have not had an attack. The pared scabs of the recovering patient are, sometimes, treasured up to a shred by interested persons, which, after being put into a cup of water, are emptied into the mouth of those that need a visitation; or, the rancid ropy matter from the pustules that have been rather late in healing, is mixed with milk and sugar, and given as a beverage. But very frequently the matter is also introduced straightway into sores which one may chance to have on the body. In all such cases, it is said, the attack will be less violent, for, the man, who is the subject of the experiment, has thereby shown himself to be solicitous to serve under *Mâri* for a time. This voluntary method of inviting *Mâri* is supposed to be highly propitious to her, and she, in return, would, in a large measure, slacken the demand of hospitalities from her "host."

The general belief in the Southern districts of this Presidency regarding the duration of the after-effects of the epidemic, is that it will take the patient not less than a year from the date of the attack, to recoup his lost health and strength, and in exceptional cases, even more. It is also a prevalent notion that with the recovery of a man from small-pox, any other disease that might have been already afflicting him, would vanish. An attack of small-pox is thus said to be a most wonderful purifier of the human frame.

A Hindu who has lost a dear kinsman of his, as the victim of the contagion, ought not to indulge in loud outbursts of weeping, lest he, by so doing should irritate the pugnacious divinity into spreading her ravages still more among his relations. On the other hand, he might "dance" with joy and merriment, at all acts of the Goddess, no matter whether they are right or wrong.

Although the fact is beyond all reasonable contention that the contagion has been plaguing India from times lost to memory, the level-headed Dravidian is not tired of telling the world that the disease began in India only with the introduction of Railways. He tells us the interesting story that both the small-pox and cholera Goddesses were roused: out of their eternal slumber, and caused to roam fiercely at large, by certain early European Railway Engineers, who irreverently gave orders to destroy their old temples, for the bare fault of chancing to intercept a Railway line, that was laid up in North India. In any case, we should not fail to congratulate him upon the daring ingenuity of his well-minded concoction.

V. V. RAMANAN.

Salutation to the deity who is not definable in time or space: infinite, pure intelligence in incarnate form: who is peace and glory, whose sole essence is self-knowledge.—Bhartrihari.

THE

LIGHT OF TRUTH

OR

Siddhanta Deepika.

MADRAS, FEBRUARY & MARCH, 1902.

Sri Rama and the Ramayana.

In the September and October number of this magazine there appeared an article entitled "The King and the Sudra Saint," with our comments thereon. Exception has been taken to our language, and we publish below the correspondence on that subject between ourselves and our learned brother Mr. T. Sadasiva Aiyar. We have always had the greatest respect for the talents of our brother, but we are very sorry, we cannot be in agreement with his views on this question, the differences being so marked and fundamental.

Our brother virtually believes that the sage Valmiki lived and wrote his poem in the Dwapara Yuga itself and that every incident narrated in it are facts of history which has thus the merit of being recorded by a contemporary, who was besides blessed with occult vision and that all the characters and figures introduced therein were real beings, and celestial ones too, and he could also explain obscure incidents in the light of occultism. He is equivocal, however, about the divinity of Sri Rama. He is regarded by our brother as an Avatar of the Saguna Vishnu. He postulates also that Parabrahman cannot be born as an Avatar, and cannot appear in human or any other form. But as to our query 'Can Parabrahman, become the Saguna Iswara ?' he replies that the liberated man who has become Sivam or Parabrahman can through His Grace limit himself to Saguna Iswara and do the action of creation, preservation and destruction in appropriate forms. He also says "There are great Iswaras who have reached Nirguna Parabrahman and *who are therefore called Parabrahman*, but whenever they will have to do so, can limit themselves to Saguna." From these at any rate we can deduce that Parabrahman *per se* cannot become Saguna Iswara and cannot be the cause or the occasion for gestation, human or the rest. But *Jivas, souls*, when liberated, become Saguna Iswaras, who entering Nirguna Para-Brahman become Para-Brahmans as it were, and these can leave their abode when prayed for, condition themselves and become once again Saguna Beings animating human forms. Becoming men and women, they too can eat and drink and grow fat, they can marry and procreate, they can acquire wealth, power and dominion, and rejoice over all these, nay, they can cry and weep, when deprived of these, grow angry and kill their enemies, and becoming despondent, can give up their ghost though of course voluntarily. But "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and entrances ; And one man in his time plays many parts." But in the ordinary world, there is some moral code, or ethical test for one's acting, because one is so human out and out in all seriousness and necessity. But these divine or semi-divine players are merely mock-players and spoil their acting by being conscious that they are so ; and even if they should forget for a moment that they are mock-mortals, the Gods come out in all their pageants and fully proclaim to them that they are Divine, greatly Divine.

But, for our part, we believe that all the so-called inspired works we peruse are after all the productions of their much despised *kali* age, and that as our friend Kali is growing in years, he is seeing more and more of advance in art and science, and in morality and good government, than it ever was the fortune of any anterior period real or visionary. Our moral sense has been growing keener and our intellect brighter, and our religion certainly purer, though on the other hand the existence of vice and sin and irreligion and superstition is found in equal abundance. And it is work-a-day men and not celestials who are honestly trying to combat as far as possible such ills flesh is heir to.

We believe also that these works contain more fiction than fact and that they have lessons for the ordinary reader and not alone to the Occult Seer. Exaggeration was the characteristic trait of the age of these ancient writers ; and infant minds always delight in astounding situations, blood-curding catastrophes, and dreamland wonders, *e.g.*, our Fairy Tales and Arabian Nights Entertainments. No doubt some of these books are intended to teach us moral duties comprising the first three Purusharthas, Dharma,

Artha, and Kama, and some books there are which convey spiritual truths by means of parables, allegories or stories and these deal with the last Purushartha Moksha; and some books with all these combined. We believe it to be the good of society that books dealing with the first three are as important to it as the last class of books; and there is actually danger in people becoming too much Brahmanised, for it is apt to produce more hypocrites than really honest men. The present crisis in our age may even involve this element of danger. As our Brother observes truly, the purpose of Ramayana is to teach us our duties in regard to Dharma, Artha, and Kama, the *reward* being the securing of earthly bliss and enjoyment, of hymeneal happiness, of wealth, domestic, peace, children, union of friends and relations, and so on. But our Brother thinks that Uttara Kanda is believed to give Moksha; but on reading the last page of this Kanda, we fail to come across any such *phalam* being recounted: on the contrary, removal of sins, long life and prosperity, sons, riches, honour in this world and the world of the dead, and strength, these are all the *phalams* set forth on this last page. We doubted that the Uttarakanda was the work of the writer of the Purvakanda, and we find we are not alone in our suspicion. Several Pundits whom we consulted have expressed similar doubts and this is probably the real reason for its unpopularity, though of course an occult reason is given as is always usual. We find at least one proof in the book itself. The last section of the Yuddhakanda finishes off the story completely after stating that Sri Rama lived for ten thousand years in glory and happiness, performing ten Aswamedhams, &c., and that all his subjects lived happily and long. And it continues, "And this sacred Epic, the fruit of its kind, affording piety, fame and long life, and describing the conquest of the Kings was composed by Valmiki in the days of yore," and all the *phalams* for reciting Valmiki's story are recounted in detail—such as multiplied relations, increased wealth and crops, beautiful wives, excellent happiness and the accomplishment of all desires, long life, wealth, fame, intellect, prowess and good brothers; (and in this long list forsooth we don't find any thing concerning its spiritual efficacy). And why we ask should this section devoted to the authorship and *phalams* be added here, at the end of the Yuddhakanda, if in fact the work was not finished here as it stood originally?—when in fact we do not find any such statement at the end of any of the previous *kandas*. And the reiterated statement at the end of the Uttarakanda that Valmiki even wrote the Uttarakanda, and the citing of Brahma himself as a witness thereof, is extremely suspicious. Brahma lost all worship for telling one lie on a a previous occasion, and the writer of this passage evidently wants to heap further coals on his devoted heads. We recognize also that the work was written in an age when the belief in a host of gods, Indra and Varuna, Agni, Vâyu, Soma and Surya as still powerful had not been altogether lost. We recognize also that in course of time this belief again was lost, and more monotheistic beliefs centred round one person alone of the lot; the personality of Sri Rama was so far magnified that the recognition began to be confined to distinct sects, and these believed that Sri Rama was the real Parabrahman, and none else, and we have several Upanishads concocted for the purpose of raising him to the highest divine pedestal. Similarly the character of Sri Krishna set forth in the Mahabharata was evolved so as to make him a great god, Krishnaism and Bhagavata Purana and Krishnatapini and Gopalatapini Upanishads being the result of this odd dispensation.

For one thing, we have not blindly followed the opinions of western scholars, though at the same time we have hardly stinted to appreciate the large amount of sense in their writings. Where they have failed is in failing to understand us even from our own standpoint; there being such a vast hiatus of basic difference between standpoint of the orientals including the Jews and the Christians, and that of the occidentals.

We understand that in Religion, sentiment or emotion is a potent factor, and fain would we have examined the figure of Sri Rama as depicted by Valmiki, but we are afraid we would be wounding the feelings of our friends and brothers. And we need not make secret of the fact that the writers of Rama's history after Valmiki, whatever might be the language they should have chosen to depict the narration have displayed greater delicacy of taste and culture and in fact a good deal more ingenuity. They have omitted very many ugly incidents, glossed over the inconsistencies, sought plausible reasons and explanations for some irreconcilable facts, and have avoided the semi-coarse language of Valmiki. When we pointed out the brutal language put by Valmiki into the mouth of Rama at the time of Sita's first "Trial,"

our Brahmin friend was simply horrified. Such language will be readily perceived to be inconsistent with our present notion of Sri Rama. Kamban, our Tamil poet, would not even hold that Ravana had even touched Sita; because he knew that to have used the language of Valmiki would have been jarring to the feelings of his audience. The Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti introduces nicer touches in his version of the Sudra Saint's story. According to Valmiki, it is not a voice from Heaven that proclaimed the cause of the Boy's death, but it was Rama's Brahmin advisers who were called in and who imparted this precious information. Rama's hand did not pause and his heart did not melt at the sight of the Sudra Saint, according to Valmiki; but he goes right up to the Saint and chips off his head with his beautiful sword! and Behold! the gods appear and praise him for this. And from the story as given here, there is no room even for the Occult interpretation offered by our Brother. The Brahmin advisers in Valmiki hold that for a Sudra to do penance is *ipso facto* an iniquity and a sin for which the only expiation is by a death-penalty. If the Sudra Saint did however get into Heaven it was not through his merit, but it was on account of the merit of the person who killed him. The story of Bhima killing a huge serpent and releasing it from the mortal coil is good as a story and less repugnant to our sense Valmiki does not state either that the Sudra was under any curse nor does he make him thank Rama and feel grateful for this proffered Salvation *via* homicide! Valmiki states also that it was due to Rama's own iniquity in allowing a Sudra to practise penance, that the Brahmin boy died. Poets and dramatists do not always draw on facts for their story, and are not faithful to their prototypal text or original, be that a previous poetic legend or a composite mass of fugitive tradition, but lay their copious imagination under severe contribution, and Bhavabhuti and Kamban are not exceptions to this dictum.

We will append now the correspondence relating to this subject which inevitably, though fortunately, has afforded us an opportunity to voice our opinions on 'Rama and the Ramayana.' What we have stated above in such elaboration and entirety will be better comprehended, by our readers, after a close perusal of the following letters and the replies they elicited from our pen in return.

I.

From the correspondent.

In the September and October number of the *Light of Truth*, the Editor has very ably removed some misapprehensions of the Reverend Dr. G. U. Pope regarding the life of Saint Sundara. Though the Reverend Gentleman's fulminations were put very delicately, we all felt them keenly.

2. But is it not very surpising to see in the Editorial "notes and comments" in that same issue a complete misunderstanding of the Life of the Divine Avatara of Sri Rama? The Editorial (unlike Dr. Pope) fulminates violently against Sri Rama that "he is a most shocking instance of caste and priestly tyranny," "of want of courage and moral strength," "of humanity and justice," etc. Leaving aside Bhava Bhooti's poem, has the learned Editor cared to read the incidents in Valmiki's Ramayana itself? That the Editor should adopt the grotesque absurd Western theory that Sage Valmiki through jealousy and antagonism put down the Southerns as monkeys shows how deeply the wells of sober thought in English-educated minds have been poisoned by the *à priori* speculations of Western so-called Orientalists. Mr. Telang, Mr. R. C. Dutt, Mr. M. M. Kunte, Mr. Ranade and many similar gigantic intellects have succumbed to the poisonous influence. Sage Valmiki says that the monkeys who assisted Sri Rama were born of Gods and had the power to change their forms at will and were specially sent to the earth to assist Him in the glorious enterprise of re-establishing Dharma. Of course, if the Editor has become so enlightened as to think that all this is superstitious or, even worse, a deliberate lie (a "sop" thrown out to the cerberus of popular conscience as if the popular conscience would have been better than that of the saintly chronicler), I have nothing more to say. That Valmiki "did not cherish great veneration for the piety of the monkeys" though he could "hardly deny them the qualities of courage, truthfulness, and fidelity" is also grotesque when we know that Hanuman was praised by Sri Rama at the very first interview for his very great learning in all the Vedas and Shastras and in Grammar and Hanuman is considered the very embodiment of piety. In short, unless we ruthlessly strike off every passage in the Ramayana which goes against our preconceived view that "monkeys" means "Southerns," we will be met by difficulties at each step. If those passages were taken away, you can amuse yourself with a parody of the Ramayana like Mark Twain's parody of Shakespear's Julius Cæsar or of "George Washington's life."

3. " Poor Sîta being swallowed up by the Earth is mere poetic symbology for a most heart-rending suicide." This is absurd (please excuse the word). Sîta Devi was born of Mother Earth and not of human womb and she was taken back by the Spirit of the Earth, through her purity and at her request. I ask a plain question " Do you or do you not believe in the Regents of the Earth, Water, Fire, Vayu and Akas mentioned in all our religious books, (Divine, intelligent, powerful beings guiding Evolution) and in their Devis " ? If you don't, I am not surprised at your remarks. If Rama was an ordinary Kshatriya, his act of abandoning his pure wife was blameable. But he was a King and the duties of a King are in some respects different from those of other Kshatriyas. He can kill his unruly and vicious subjects without observing the ordinary rules of warfare and he must so conduct himself (by denying for himself even lawful private pleasures) so as to misguide many of his contemporary subjects in the path of Dharma (*sic*). Even Saint Bhîshma felt diffident about the path of Dharma in some instances, but you seem to be cock-sure of everything. Your statements that King " Rama repented of his act " and " all his subsequent miseries are due to it " are quite wrong. He never repented (according to the Ramayana) except for his having wasted three days in sorrowing for Sîta's absence and in not having looked after the welfare of his subjects during those three days. Of course, his loving heart felt and voluntarily bore all the acute miseries of separation, but only in order to show to us how dear a wife should be to the heart of her husband, and to show that we also ought to bear all miseries for the sake of Dharma. What does Mother Sîta herself say to Lakshmana when she is abandoned, quite close to the hermitage of Valmiki? She says that she understood Sri Rama's motives well and that Sri Rama should not grieve for her but should protect his subjects with Dharma.

4. Coming to the Sudra's death, the Ramayana shows that the Sudra was performing penance not to attain " Sivam" or " Moksham" but to go to Swarga (a place of mental comfort) along with his physical and astral bodies like Trisanku. In short, he was making a low kind of Kâmya Tapas, the higher Tapas being common to all castes. Tapas to attain Swarga after physical and astral bodies die is also not prohibited. What Sambuka wanted was different and he knew that it was not his Dharma to make the kind of Tapas he was performing. Sri Rama before striking off his body asks him about his caste and the purpose of his Tapas (See the 75th and the 76th Chapters of Uttara-Ramayana). Sambuka admits that he is a Sudra and wants to go to Swarga with his physical body. Now, why did the Brahmin boy die during Sambuka's Tapas and why was the dead body resuscitated when Sambuka was slain? Of course, if you treat these two facts also as " sops," I have no more to say. But if these were really facts, they show that the Sudra's Kâmya Tapas required that his impure astral principles should be purified by combining with the principles of the Brahmin boy's pure astral body before he (the Sudra) could go to Swarga in his body, and that he did not care even if the boy died provided his purpose was attained. When the Sudra was slain, the vital principles of the boy returned to the boy and the Sudra went to Swarga in his own Devachanic body.

5. But are the vital astral principles of all Brahamins in all ages purer than those of Sudras in all ages? Are persons with Sudra bodies always prohibited from performing Tapas? This question is also discussed in the 74th Chapter of Uttara-Ramayana itself, and it is only after considering in Council the Dharma rules relating to this question that Sri Rama goes to Sambuka. There, the king's minister Narada says that in Krita Yuga all men were Brahmins and performed Tapas, that in Treta yuga, souls in Kshatriya bodies became fit to perform Tapas without prejudice to other men, that in Dvapara Yuga souls in Vaisya bodies became fit to make Tapas and that in the forthcoming Kaliyuga souls in (nominal) Sudra bodies can also do Tapas, but that in that Dvapara Yuga (which was then going on) such Tapas was " Adharma." Sage Valmiki and Sage Narada had Sudra bodies in their previous births.

6. Sri Rama treated(Sugriva) and Guka (*sic*)as his brothers. He threatened and abused the Brahmin Jâbala for his atheistical talk. He slew the Brahmans Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and to talk of him as subject to caste and priestly tyranny and as wanting in moral courage is absurd. That the so-called mediæval Brahmins were guilty of caste-tyranny and prejudice and that we Hindus are suffering for our national sins are true. But that Sage Valmiki or Vyasa or Sri Rama was guilty of caste jealousy and tyranny is (to use your very learned Correspondent Mr. M. Narayanasamy Aiyar's words) a statement of such fantastic character that the very word " Historical " would be a misnomer if applied to it. Brahmins ought to be patient and tolerant according to Manu and they do not deserve that name if they do not bear personal insults meekly. But as a great Avatara was attacked by you not in dubious or delicate, but, very violent language, I have thought it my duty to send this humble contribution.

COIMBATORE, 25-2-01. T. SADASIVAIYAR.

II.

From the Editor.

Your MSS. was put into my hands when I returned home after meeting you, otherwise I would have discussed some points therein with you in person.

I have not got the Volumes of Ramayan with me and I don't know where these stories occur. For one thing, I regard that the Uttara portion of a Purana or Itihasa was not written by the same author who wrote the Pûrva portion : Do you believe that the Uttara Ramayana was the work of Sage Valmiki ?

Who do you take the ' monkeys ' in Valmiki for ? You know we always speak at first of an alien as குரங்கு மூஞ்சிப் பயல் " ?

You know I strongly hold that God cannot be *born* or become incarnate on earth THROUGH THE WOMB (யோனிவாய்ப் பட்டு) ; though he can *appear in human form*, and that this is one of the cardinal points of our Siddanta ?

Those alone who are still in the folds of the three gunas *can get a saguna body*, however high they may have been placed ?

Though they may not be ' *Divine* ' (in my sense of the nature of the Highest Principle) they may be like ' Divine.' But till they become ' Divine' by repeated births, it won't be wrong to say that they now and then exhibit some blot or frailty. So you may excuse me if I think that Sri Rama is not immaculate in every respect. And I have always held to this opinion consistently in the journal. One may love Srî Rama, as Tulsi Das says, as the son of Dasaratha, though one may not regard him as the incarnation of the Highest.

Evidently, Sri Rama's power as a sovereign waned while nearing his end, and so, he may have committed some act just to please the multitude, which he in his highest wisdom may not have approved.

One or two more queries and I shall have done.

Can you refer me to any authority *which enjoins a king to act on mere gossip and vile scandal ?* Is this in any way consistent with our human or even divine ideas of justice ? Is there any law which requires any king to be unjust to himself ?

You know how euphimistic the phrases " மண்ணிலிறந்தினன்" " பூமாதுடன்போய்ச்சேர்ந்தாள் " are phrases cognate with "சிவலோகப் பிராப்தி," " பரமபதப் பிராப்தி," &c.

Did not Lakshmana kill himself ? Did not Srî Rama enter the Sarayu ? How do you interpret these facts ?

3—1—1902. EDITOR.

III.

From the correspondent.

1. I received your kind letter. I believe the Uttara Ramayana to be the work of Valmiki Rishi though in the northern editions additional spurious chapters have been added to it. Of course in all our religious works such interpolations exist. The first six Kandams close with Srî Rama's coronation and hence do not complete Srî Rama's life. Just as the Mahabharatam cannot be completed at Yuthishtira's coronation and must go on till his Swargârohanam, so the Uttara Ramayana is a necessary portion of the Ramayana. In the Bala-kanda it is said that Valmiki wrote the Uttara portion also. The total numbers of the chapters are also given besides the total number of the Slokas (24,000). The first Sloka of each 1,000 Slokas begin with the twenty-four letters of the Gayatri in regular order. When tested by these data, the Uttara Ramayana must be considered as Valmiki's genuine work. It is however considered detrimental to worldly prosperity to read it just as Govinda Narayana and Mahadeva or "Kadâpatamâtas" (*sic*). Again, of the Uttara Ramayana is not a genuine production of Valmiki, why do you find fault with Srî Rama in respect if his two acts of killing the Sudra ascetic and the abandonment of Sita, which stories occurring only in the Uttara Ramayana ?

2. As I have said in my paper I take the monkey friends of Srî Rama to have been born of Devas to semi-human women (of monkey form usually), they being an off-shoot of the third root-race whose bodies were not hardened like ours and were more etherial and capable of temporary alterations of form. (See Secret Doctrine, Vol. II). As to prejudiced ignorance talking of aliens as குரங்குமூஞ்சி, it has nothing to do with the talk of sages like Valmiki. The notion of Orientalists and Material Philosophers that religions and religious stories had their origin in infantile ignorance and prejudiced race-hatred and blind hero-worship is utterly opposed to theosophic truth and to the sober conclusions of rational historical studies. Ordinary men of course in all ages talk ignorantly and in a prejudiced way but the Rishis and the founders of religions are highly evolved souls who have gone above the distinctions of caste, creed, race and colour and who saw Truths by a vision which belongs to a plane above the plane of the highest intellect.

3. I agree with you that the supreme Parabrahman cannot be incarnated in its fullness. I even go beyond you and hold that the Nirguna Brahman cannot appear in a human or any other form because all form implies limitation. The Saguna Iswara who does the three works

of Creation, Preservation and Destruction has got three aspects. In His two aspects as Brahma and Rudra he doos not incarnate, that is, does not take up *relatively permanent* forms in which a life of some length is lived out and a great drama is played out. Brahma and Rudra merely take passing forms, for special purposes and throw them aside as soon as the purpose is served. But in Iswara's Vishnu aspect he makes (*sic*) Avataras as in that aspect He is the supporter and preserver of forms, and guides the laws of evolution and teaches Dharma by example from time to time, when the sattwic forces in the universe are almost overborne by the rajasic and tamasic forces from time to time. Yonee is as much made of Panchabhûtas as a Lingam-stone or Brahma's brow or a cattle-tying wooden post, out of which Sree Mahadeva has risen in temporary forms or as the stone pillar, out of which Sree Narasimha came out. I cannot understand the philosophical *rationale* of the superiority claimed for a form when it comes out of a stone or pillar, and the inferority of the form alleged to be caused by its coming out of a fleshly tabernacle. A human being which issues out of Yônee (வாய்) is superior to a stone or a sexual plant which comes into existence without passing through a Yônee. The Omnipresent Supreme in all his three aspects is present in every particle of matter including the yônees of all creatures. Even when Lord Mahadeva or Brâhma take forms to bless his worshippers, those forms have to come out of the womb of nature and space. The distinctions between the three aspects of God when made not for philosophic purposes of clearly understanding his Sakties but out of the desire born of human weakness to exalt one at the expense of the other two, so that we might have the satisfaction of seeing imperfections in beings held Supremely Sacred by others, will not lead to peace of mind or to correct apprehension of the inner meanings of the apparently contradictory Puranic stories (see 12th Skantam of Srimat Bhagavatam, dialogue between Markandeya and Mahadeva). The three aspects do different, though indissolubly connected, kinds of work (according to the grasp of our limited intelligence) and they do such works not for the sake of themselves or as bound by Karma, but they limit themselves voluntarily out of Grace and do the works in appropriate forms for purifying the Jeevas out of the latter's A'nava and Karma Malas. The incarnation of one of the sacred aspects through a womb, or without the medium of a womb (as in the case of the 1st four Avataras), cannot degrade Him any more than the Mahadeva aspect, dancing naked in burning grounds or interceding with Paravaiyar for his bhakta Sree Sundara, or testing his devotees by asking them to do apparently cruel and inhuman things, can affect his majesty or purity. As to the "Cardina points" of the Siddhanta, I am afraid that like our other philosophical systems, its original purity might have got soiled by the dogmatisms and idiosyncrasies of its later followers. The Siddhanta in my opinion contains the clearest and most logical expositions of metaphysical Tattva philosophy even now. I consider you as my elder brother as regards clear metaphysical thinking, but I am not so sure of your superiority as regards the reverential treatment and understanding of puranic stories and historical traditions.

4. Of course the word 'Avataras' is used very loosely and even persons like Parasu Rama who have not become Divine (in your sense) though they have long spells of divine influence, are called Avataras. But Srî Rama is considered as a being who though born only as "half-Divine" reached full Divinity when he broke Sree Mahadeva's bow, while Sree Krishna had reached full divinity several Kalpas before his Avatara. Sree Rama's power as a sovereign waxed higher and higher and never waned. The Dharmas and actions of different beings vary according to their position. It is said in the Bhagavatam that Iswara in his three aspects praises and worships his Bhaktas as greater than himself, that one of His objects is, the testing of his Bhaktas and the strengthening of their humility and devotion, that another object is to set an example to ordinary men, and that he has other inscrutable objects also. Again the I'swaras and the ordinary Devas place temptations in the paths of Bhaktas and Ascetics and do other acts which are prohibited to men. A king's highest duty according to Manu is to sacrifice himself for the welfare of his subjects and he attains the Highest Worlds thereby, and there can be no injustice to himself in obeying that law.

5. As regards Lakshmana's and Srî Rama's giving up of their bodies voluntarily, it is not ordinary suicide, as the latter word is usually used to denote the self destruction of the body for the purpose of escaping troubles here or enjoying pleasures hereafter. When Karaikkal Pechi Ammaiyar threw off her fleshly form her husband had released her from her duty as his wife and she did not want any longer the beautiful flesh-body which might be a hindrance to her worship of the Lord Siva. Further there are Swêchchânta-mrithyus whose bodies cannot die without their free consent and yogees like Bheeshma have to commit suicide by raising their *Prana* voluntarily through the Brahmarandhra. Sarabanga and Sabaree burnt up their bodies as useless in future, after they had waited to hospitably entertain Srî Rama with their bodies. Soldiers and Martyrs voluntarily court Death to fulfil duty. The Uttara-Ramayana says that Brahma-Deva sent Mrityu to Srî Rama to inform Him that His work on the earth had been completely performed, and then, Srî Lakshmana and Srî Rama give up their bodies by the Yoga Marga while immersed in the waters of Sa-

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rayu. The Jaina religion requires ascetics to starve themselves to death when their bodies become useless to do further good to the earthly beings.

T. SADASIVAIYAR.

IV.

From the Editor.

Many thanks for your reply. But your reply raises up so many more points that I would fain put you some more queries.

Do you seriously contend that Ramayana is history? Perhaps you also mean this work was composed in the Dwapara Yuga. You admit that there are interpolations in Ramayana. But perhaps you are not prepared to hear that for several hundreds of years the whole of Bagavata has been regarded as spurious both by Indian and European scholars ; nay they have traced even the authorship of the worship. But of course you will all put it to sectarian and anti-Hindu prejudices, but why should you not extend your hand of charity and toleration to these people and credit them with some regard for truth ?

In regard to the question of Avatars, my statement was general. I simply said that God cannot incarnate and I defined God below as the Highest Principle. Whenever I use such word I always refer to the supreme Brahmam Nirguna. You see in this statement of mine only an attempt to elevate one sect over another. Is this charitable? In your reply you don't question this statement of principle itself, though you are pleased to dogmatise at once on the dogmatisms of Saiva Siddhanta. Can you kindly state what you regard as the dogmatisms of this Siddhanta ? Is the distinction between Nirguna Parabrahmam and Saguna. Iswara a dogmatism or not ? Are these distinct ? Is the distinction real or fancied ? Can the Parabrahmam become the Saguna Iswara ? If the Parabrahmam can become Saguna Vishnu and Vishnu can become born through the womb and incarnate as man, can we or can we not draw the conclusion that the Parabrahmam can be born through the womb ? Well, but where is the difficulty of Parabrahmam incarnating as man or beast or anything ? I want this position to be much more defined and see if the explanations offered by yourself do not hold good even here. I have elsewhere explained the real reasons for this doctrine. The reason is not that any appearance is a limitation, in which the Parabrahmam's *omnipresence* itself is a limitation. The real ground is that, the supreme who is Mayatita, beyond Tamas, and beyond the three Gunas could not bring himself within the folds of Maya or Guna. This is the distinction of Nirguna and Saguna. Nirguna is where one cannot be enfolded by the Gunas and subjected to their influence ; Saguna is where the subject is subjected to the folds of the three Gunas or Prakriti and the Saguni can rise higher and higher by getting outside the influence of the Gunas and finally to get outside them altogether. But the Parabrahmam is still present in Maya or Prakriti But this presence is a mystery, *i.e.*, not possible to explain exactly, but this presence is in no way similar to the presence of the *Guni* on the Saguna body. If otherwise, the distinction between Nirguna and Saguna itself will vanish. The distinction between sexual and asexual is important, if only that the latter points to a highly differentiated and organised and evolved physical body, showing how deep the spirit had been materialised or subjected to the folds of Prakriti. You will be surprised to find that a very ancient Tamil classic writer in speaking of the Narasimha ranks it higher than the other Avataras, in fact it was a Yonijates. You can see there could be no birth of a manlion from the stone. It is a mere appearance. But by the way, did you ever know that the Saivites—the sectarians you may call them—have never identified their supreme ideal—call it by whatever name you like ("ஒருருவம் ஓர் நாமம் ஒன்றுமில்லார்க்கு ஆயிரம் திருநாமம்பாடி நாம் தெள்ளேணம் கொட்டாமோ—திருவாசகம்) —with one of the three. Will it be news to you if you are told that their GOD lower or higher whatever it is, is never called by them as Saguna. Do you know that even the Trimurti Rudra or Siva is not Sakuna but Nirguna. And that even though a being could be Nirguna, yet it is not the Parabrahmam (to you Parabrahmam and Nirguna Being are synonymous). The Beings or Jivas between the 26th, (25th is Prakriti composed of three Gunas) and 36th Tatwa composing matter are all Nirguna Beings though not outside matter or maya ; though they are clothed in material bodies higher than the Saguna bodies...Not that you do not know these things, but I really could not understand how you can ignore these, when month after month I have been repeating these things in the pages of the Deepika? Perhaps one may suggest that this is not Saivaism or that the Saivites assume their position to appear to be supreme to the Vaishnivites out of blind sectarian prejudices. But you know the story of *Durvasa*. Is this story a sectarian one and fictitious? (This story rebuts your position that Brahman cannot be born of the womb). Can any one point out any passage in the Vedas, and Upanishads, Agamas, Itihasas or Puranas in which the Being or Beings named as Iswara, Maheswara, Parameshwara, Mahadeva, Rudra, Sankara, Siva, Sambhu, Bava, Sarva, &c., is called SAGUNA. On the other hand, these are distinctly called Nirguna. But you know it is the foible or dogmatism of the Vedantists of a certain type or sect to read 'Lower Brahman' or 'Saguna Brahman,' wherever these words occur, a position held to be untenable ever

by such people as Prof. Max Müller and Dr. Thebaut. I have often pointed out the absurdities and ludicrousness and perversities of interpretation which flow from this preconceived theory or *sectarian prejudice*. You know the well-known definitions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. It has always seemed to me that definitions of sectarian and non-sectarian could be reduced to similar terms. A non-sectarian is one's own enunciation of truth and principle, and sectarian is the other's dogmas. I believe that even absolute truth must be sectarian. The persons believing in it will form a 'sect' as distinguished from those who differ or oppose it. Even if those who hold to the truth will not call themselves 'sectarian,' the others will call them so. Can you not really *define* 'truth' as held to by 'theosophy.' When *defined*, has it not got a *limit* or *bound*? Dear Brother, you must really excuse my prolixity. Because in these matters when you pull up a twig, you pull up the whole plant, branches trunk and roots and all. Each truth is based on another, rests on another and could only be understood in relation to the others. And thus we arrive at certain truths or body of truths, which are mutually related, have a natural cohesive symmetry and harmony, a well known basis and structure. You cannot have really an olla podrida. You can't pluck roses from thistles nor sweets from a neem tree.

Dear Brother, I have no copy of Manu with me, will you kindly quote the passage referred to by you?

By the way, it is not for the first time I express this opinion about Srî Rama and Ramayana in the pages of the Deepika and you did not evidently think it worthy of protest at the time. The story of the Sudra Saint is recited and commented on by me at p. 189, vol. II and I am not the first to give vent to such criticisms either; nor were they Saivites and at page III, same vol. I observe "And there could be no excuse for the writer of the Ramayana for his ungrateful and ungenerous travesty of the Tamilians and the gross exaggeration and hyperboles he deals with; and the only excuse could be that he was altogether ignorant of the Tamil people," &c., &c.

I have already set forth my views as regards the reading and interpreting of *sacred history*. But the majority of Puranas do not even form 'sacred history' in the strict sense of the term. I have also explained elsewhere as to how one should read the Puranas. And in the writing of the history of the rise of Hindu religions and sects, even Bhagavata has its place. One could really distinguish between the faith and beliefs of the people when the Ramayana and Mahabharata came to be actually written, and those of people or at least of the portion of them who lived in the age when the Bhagavata was actually written. Why, the writer of Bhagavata actually thinks that all other Puranas and Vedas were not satisfactory from his point of view. I wish you would calmly consider the views of Colebroke and Wilson on these subjects (*vide* the small book on Puranas brought out by the Society for the Resuscitation of Oriental Literature.) The Sanskrit journal of Pudukota extracted the passage from Wilson bearing on the Bhagavata but curiously enough it did not give its own views on the question, but evidently it acquiesced in the Professor's views. And in the Saiva-Vaishnava views on these matters, at least you can regard these oriental scholars as impartial judges. Your extreme devotion to the person of Sri Krishna should not make you forget all other questions of chronology and true historical criticism. I am afraid Mr. Narayanasawmy Iyer will be the last to uphold your views of Ramayana. I know his views are much worse than mine.

Editor.

V.

From the Correspondent.

(1.) As I have very little leisure, I will not lengthen this letter by hunting up and quoting authorities but will answer your further queries briefly and you will excuse me if I am not clear.

(2.) At the risk of being considered superstitious and unenlightened, I confess that I believe Ramayana to be History and that it was composed in the Dwapara Yuga. Bhagavatham is the name of one of the 18 Puranas and without it, you cannot make up 18. When Sakti worship increased in Bengal, Devi Bhagavathamwas attempted to be substituted for the original Bhagavatham and the latter was alleged to be the forgery of one Boppa Deva. There have been, of course, "eminent" Indian and European scholars who are prepared to prove that every Hindu work is a forgery, that everything good in them was borrowed from the Bible, that Hindus did not know writing till recently and that even Panini the Grammarian was illiterate, that the Vedas are the babblings of infant humanity, that it is all superstitious personification of astronomical facts or of dreams or ancestor worship and so on and so forth. The Reverend Lazarus in the *Christian College Magazine* for January says that it is established by eminent Scholars that the Bhagavat Geeta is a forgery made by a Vaishnava Brahmin in the second century A.D. and that all persons of all sects having a copy of the Maha Babarata were persuaded by this forger in the days when there was neither Railway, Telegraph or Printing press to insert this Geeta in all the copies of the Maha Bharatam—even Mr. Ranade was persuaded by these eminent scholars to believe that all Southern Sudras were barbarous aborigines who were worshipping devils which were changed into Vedic gods by the influence of crafty Brahmins. Of course, I credit them all with regard for

Truth, though not with much sympathetic reverence for the ancient Religious works. Saint Sreedhara Chariar quotes passages from other Puranas showing that the marks of the Bhagavata Purana are (*a*) its being taught by Suka, (*b*) its beginning with a sloka which paraphrases the Gayathri, (*c*) its peculiar treatment of Vrithrasura Vadham, and so on, and proves that the work he comments upon is the genuine Bhagavatam and that the theory of forgery by Boppa Deva is absurd.

(3.) You say "But this presence (of Parabrahmam in Maya) is a mystery; *i.e.*, not possible to explain, &c." I agree. A man who does not know even simple equations cannot grasp the meaning of the functions in a problem in Integral Calculus. But there are great Iswaras who have reached Nirguna Parabrahmam and who are therefore called Parabrahmam but who, whenever they will to do so, can limit themselves to Saguna Beings. They exercise that will whenever their Devotees pray to them to do so. There are three kinds of such Beings, the Trimoorties. Parabrahman (that is, Iswara who had reached Parabrahman) took the Narasimha Form to protect Prahlada and he took "asexual birth for doing certain acts for the good of His world. He took "sexual" birth at request of Devas, Rishis, Earth, &c., as Sri Krishna to do certain other works. One of the dogmatisms of *the later followers of* the Siddhanta School is that the distinction between "sexual" "a sexual" appearances is an important one. Sree Krishna was *never* bound by His physical Body which He used as His instrument and He was able, at will, to show His omnipotence and omnipresence and there was no "*Materialisation or subjection of the spirit to* a highly defferentiated and organized and evolved physical body and to the folds of Prahriti" as you suppose.

(4.) You ask "can the Parabrahmam become the Saguna Iswara?" I answer that the liberated man who has become Sivam or Parabrahmam can, through His Grace, limit Himself to Saguna Iswara and do the acts of Creation, Preservation and Destruction in appropriate forms, the second act of Preservation requiring the taking of many forms on many occasions.

(5.) As your letter states, Parabrahmam has no form and no name and yet, we praise IT with 1,000 names All the 1,000 names and forms are on such a high plane tha to us, the distinctions must remain a mystery and it is best to treat them as equal. It is useless and dangerous to speculate with our intellects about them till through the Grace of the Guru, we get our initiations, second births and second sights which are higher than intellectual visions. All stars are at the same distance to our physical eyes. Where distinctions between Iswaras are made or appear to be made in the religious works, it is better to see whether the distinction is made between two Beings both of whom have reached Sivam or between one who has reached Sivam (and who is called by one of the 1,000 names) and a Saguni called by another of the 1,000 names and also whether the distinctions are intended to indicate a truth of Higher Planes (called Allegory). Hence, it is that certain religious works were prohibited to be read without the Upadesam of Guru. Another dogmatism of the later followers of the Siddhanta when it became a sect was that Beings having the Vaishnavite Form and called by some of the 1,000 names could not have reached Parabrahmam and could not be called Parabrahmam and that only Beings having the other names of Siva, Rudra, Sambhu, &c., can alone be so considered. That the several sets of Trimoorties (who exist in sets in all the worlds) are called "Saguna Beings" (connected with Satwa, Rajas and Tamas as Vishnu, Brahma and Rudra) in numerous works is so patent a fact that I was surprised at your challenge to show you any place where Rudra or Sankara is styled a Saguna Being—of course, as I said before, Nirguna Beings are also called by the names of the Trimoorties.

(6.) As to the story of Durvasas, it is said in several Puranas that all the three, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva incarnated as Soma, Dattatraya and Durvasas and became sons of Atri. Sree Sankaracharya is stated by some of His followers to be the direct Avatar of Lord Siva. Whenever the influence of any of the Great Lords overshadows a man, the followers of the man make him a direct Avatar of the Lord. If the modern *Sectarian* Siddhantists will REALLY ignore the names and look at the facts, they will find that in the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagavatum, the same Siddhantam is taught, the Parabrahmam being called by the names Vasudeva, Narayana, Hari, Vishnu and so on instead of Siva, Hara, Rudra, Sambhu, &c.

(7.) I have no time to go into Tatwas as I have been too long already. There are only 9 Tatwas which can be watered into 96 and more and it is all a fight about words as shown by the Lord in the 11th Skandham of Sreemat Bhagavatam in the Upadesam to Saint Uddhava.

(8.) As to the views of Mr. Froude and others about the interpretation of Sacred History, I beg to state (and this is the theosophical view) that the full and complete interpretation must recognize the existence of higher planes seen by higher visions and that acute and laboured attempts to treat the saints as superstitious children in some respects and as highly intellectual, moral and spiritual men at the same time cannot satisfy the reason. You ought not to ignore the existence (past, present and future) of great men of superior vision who have passed on to higher worlds and yet guide the evolutions of the cycles of younger human races (their younger brothers) by translating the facts and truths of the higher planes into

the current language though such translations into human words look as strange and fantastic after a time as an algebraical formula to an infant standard boy.

T. SADASIVIER.

Correspondence.

A Reply to Prof. Julien Vinson of Paris.

To the Editor of the Siddhanta Deepika,

MADRAS.

SIR,

May I suggest that it will greatly enhance the interest taken by the public in your Journal, if you can manage to obtain the permission of Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillay to publish, in the future issues of the *Siddhanta Deepika*, his contributions that have been appearing for the last two years, in the *Madras Review* and in the *Indian Antiquary*, on the antiquities of the Tamils. The Tamil public is anxiously awaiting the book promised by Pandit Savaryroyan on "Our Ancient Tamilian Race." Some of the great men here are longing with feverish impatience to see the day when the great historical work which the renowned scholar, Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillay, is said to be preparing, will reach their hands. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." A few days ago, a veteran Tamil scholar complained to me, in tones somewhat of despair, that the publication of this important work is not likely to take place before he goes to his Long Home.

While our Tamil Pandits are thus engaged in writing the history of our ancient civilization and literature, the French oriental scholar, Professor Julien Vinson of Paris Academy, has come forward with the theory that, before the middle of the third century of the Christian era, the Tamils knew nothing of the art of writing, and that the first books in Tamil were written only in the fifth or the sixth century A.D. The only reason he gives for thus post-dating the civilization and literature of the Tamils is that, hitherto, no inscriptions, bearing dates earlier than the sixth century A.D. have turned up among the results of the excavations of the buried cities of Southern India. The argument of the Professor seems to me to rest mainly on the assumption that, South Indian Archæology is already in such an advanced state of progress that any hope of finding hereafter the inscriptions of an earlier date than the sixth century A.D. might now be altogether abandoned. Whether the Professor's assumption is right or wrong I leave it to the student of the South Indian Archæology to decide; but I would point out that, according to the old Tamil records which are extant, the primitive seat of the Tamil race was in a country, which now lies covered by the waters of the Indian ocean. In that case, it needs no argument to prove that the inscriptions belonging to the earliest eras of the Pandyian Kingdom can never become accessible to the spade of the excavator. If, indeed, the first Tamil books were written in the fifth or the sixth century A.D., will the Professor be so kind as to favour the Tamil public, with some of his conjectures at least as to what those books were? He need not be in any doubt as to the existence of books in Tamil at the fifth century A.D.; for, in the Chronicles of Ceylon, we read that, about 534 A.D., the Singhalese king of the time persecuted the Saivite Tamils resident in Ceylon and *burnt their Books*. The Professor may maintain, of course, that these books might have been composed during the preceding 100 years. But here the question forces itself what the Saivite books were that were so ruthlessly burnt by the Singhalese king. They cannot certainly, have been the Devara Hymns of Sambandha or the writings of the other Saivite sages which comprise the Saivite Sacred Scriptures called Tirumurai. For, it is now an established fact that almost all the authors of the Tirumurai lived after the fifth century A.D.; nor can it be supposed that the Saivite works destroyed by the Singhalese king were those of which Kamban, Kachiyappar and other poets of their times, or the philosophers of the Siddhanta school, who lived many centuries after Sambandha, are said to be the authors. They could not have been any Buddhistic or Jaina works like மணிமேகலை, சிந்தாமணி, etc. What then were those works which according to the Singhalese Historian suffered destruction by fire in the fifth century A.D.? If this question can at all be answered, it can I think be answered only in one way, if we may suppose that, at least, some of the Saivate literature which existed among the Tamils of the fifth century are still extant. What other answer is, indeed, possible, but that the books referred to by the Singhalese historian were mainly the production of the Sangham time, including, perhaps, the Saivaite Agamas mentioned by the early Tamil sages as existing in their time. If, then, it is conceded that the Sangam works existed in the fifth century, the question arises whether we can, with any

show of reason, advance the view that the Sangam works, which, there is every reason to believe, were multitudinous, were all composed in the fifth century of the Christian era. That it can hardly be so should be admitted by every thinking man, as such a supposition would assume a state of things among the early Tamils of Southern India, for which no historical parallels could be found among other nations of the world. Moreover, the fact that many of the words and expressions, not to speak of the metres, used by the writers of the Sangam period had become archaic or obsolete even in the days of Sambandha, leave no room to doubt the vast gulf of time which must have separated the age of the former from that of the latter. If then Sambandha lived in the sixth century A.D., at the latest, most of the Sangam works *cannot possibly* be assigned to a later date than the first or the second century of the Christian era, which is also the conclusion arrived at by the Pandits of South India on data furnished by the internal evidence of the works themselves. If the language of a nation at a certain period can afford any reliable clue in ascertaining the state and condition of that nation at that period, the remains of the Sangam works that are now available must necessarily indicate the existence of a tolerable degree of culture and civilization in the Tamils of 2,000 years ago. The architectural splendour and magnificence of the capitals of Pandian and Chola kingdoms as described in the ten Tamil Idylls are hardly compatible with the unlettered stage of a nation, and it is impossible to think that such knowledge of the art of architecture and of war and of the peaceful arts of commercial enterprise and agriculture, as would appear to have existed at those early times in the Tamil country, flourished among the people to whom even the idea of writing—the primary and essential basis of civilization—was altogether unknown. Will the French Professor do us the favour of citing an instance of a nation having ever possessed a highly cultured and polished language prior to the introduction of the art of writing among them, in the absence of which there can be no permanence or fixity of phraseology—a condition indispensable to the vigorous and healthy growth of a language, which otherwise would be too evanescent or volatile, to admit of any degree of polish of diction. We are, indeed, asked to believe that the Pandiyan who, according to Strabo, sent an embassy to Augustus Cæsar and the ascetic Philosopher Samanacharya who accompained it to Rome; and burnt himself publicly at Athens before the assembled Philosophers thereof, was an unlettered savage. The Professor will, perhaps, on calm reflection, admit that starting from his theory, one would find himself seriously at a loss to explain the existence of at least more than two or three hundred standard authors during the Sangam period. In Amirtasekhara's Commentary on யாப்பலங்காரச் சூத்திரம் the names and titles of more than 60 classical authors are quoted, most of whom have hitherto been unknown to the Tamil world. It is also significant that most of the names of the Authors and of the titles of the works referred to by this author are found among the names of those poets, some of whose stray and isolated compositions make up the collections of the last meeting of the Madura Sangham known as Ettuttokai (எட்டுத்தொகை).

Colombo. A TAMILIAN.

(*To be continued*).

Sivagnana Siddhiar of Arulnandi Sivachariar Sutra XII.

NATURE OF THE SANCTIFIED.

ADHIKARANA, 1.

1. *How the sanctified perceive the imperceptible and delight in him.*

The Sivagnanis' getting rid of the three *pâsas* which prevent them from uniting themselves to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme, and joining the company of God's devotees, and worshipping them and the forms in temples as His Form, and singing their praises, and dancing in delight, and becoming fully conscious of the superiority of Sivagnanis and the inferiority of others, and bowing low only to the devotees of the crescent-crested God, they roam about the world.

ADHIKARANA, 2.

2. *Love God's devotees and obey them.*

They love not God, who love not His devotees; They love not others, neither do they themselves. What is the good of talking about such senseless corpses? Leave off their company as their union will lead you again into births and deaths. Seek in love God's true devotees, taking their wishes as commands, speak humbly, and stand steadfast according to their gracious directions, and worship and bow to them and delight and dance.

NOTE.

The full force of the last two stanzas are brought out in the following Mantra :

He who sees, perceives and understands this, loves God, delights in God, revels in God, rejoices in God, he becomes a Svaraj, (an Autocrat or Self-Ruler) he is lord and master in all the worlds. But those who think differently from this, live in perishable worlds, and have other beings for their rulers. (Chandog. VII. 25-2).

Cf. St. Appar.

நாமார்க்கும் குடியல்லோம் நமனையஞ்சோம் நரகத்தி லிடர்ப்படோம் நடலையல்லோம்.

ADIKARANA, 3.

3. *God's Devotees are God Himself.*

As God dwells as the soul of soul in each human body designed for the purpose of reaching the Imperceptible One, and infuses His own Intelligence into them therefor, the form of His devotee is His form. As he dwells in Sivoham Samadhi, he is even God Himself. As he reaches Him in his heart following the directions of the Guru, he is God Himself. When he and his vision fail altogether, he is without doubt God. If such is the greatness of God's devotees, worship them with love to get rid of the bonds of sin.

எமாப்போம் பிணியறியோம் பணிவோமல்லோம் இன்பமே என்னாளுந் துன்பமில்லை, தாமார்க்கும் குடியல்லாத் தன்மையான சங்கரன்நற் சங்கமென்குழை யோர்காதில், கோமாற்கே நாமென்று மிரளாவாழாக் கொய்மலர்ச் சேவடியே குறுகினோமே.

என்றுநாமி யாவர்க்கு மிடைவோ மல்லோ மிருநிலத் திலெமக் கெதிராவாரு மில்லைச், சென்றுநாம் சிறுதெய்வம் சேர்வோ மல்லோம் சிவபெருமான் றிருவடியே சேரப் பெற்றோம், ஒன்றினாற் குறையுடையோ மல்லோ மன்றே யுறுபிணியார் செறலொழிந் திட்டோடிப் போனார்.

Cf. St. Manickavachaka

தேவர்கோ வறியாத தேவதேவன் செழும்பொழில்கள் பயந்து காத்தழிக்கு மற்றை, மூவர்கோனாய் நின்ற முதல்வன் மூர்த்தி மூதாதை மாதாளும் பாகத்தெந்தை, யாவர்கோ னென்னையும்வந் தாண்டு கொண்டான் யாமார்க்கும் குடியல்லோம் யாதுமஞ்சோம், மேவினோம் சிவனடியா ரடியாரோடும் மென்மேலும் குடைந்தாடி யாடுவோமே.

4. *Worship the Form in Temples as God Himself.*

They perceive God who perceive His form placed in temples as Himself. They perceive Him also who meditate on Him in the Mantric form. They who worship Him who is omnipresent in their own heart, perceive God also. To these Bhaktas, He appears as does the fire when churned or as the milk which cannot be perceived before it flows from the teats when milked.

NOTE.

This gives the Sadana and Phalam of the three classes of Mârgis. The first class, the *Chariyavans* require the grosser form of symbolic worship ; the *Kriyavans* can take to the mantric worship or prayer form ; the Yogis practise heart-worship. But as the next verse shows, the followers of the higher are not required to give up the lower forms and they do generally practise the lower forms just to keep their bodily and mental organs engaged till the body is worn out.

Cf. The famous verse of St. Appar—

விறகிற் றீயினன் பாலிற்படு நெய்போல்
மறைய நின்றுளன் மாமணிச் சோதியான்
உறவுகோல் நட்டுணர்வு கயிற்றினன்
முறுக வாங்கிக் கடையமுன் னிற்குமே.

which of course follows the famous verses in the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

"One's body taking for the lower, stick and for the upper, Om by meditation's friction well sustained, let one behold God, there lurking as it were.

"As oil in seeds, butter in cream, water in springs, and in the fire-sticks fire, so is God found in the soul, by him who seeks for Him with truth and meditation."

The point is though fire or milk is present in the whole body of the wood or cow, yet when we want to realize it, we realize it only at certain points. Nay, the Immensity of the Being is so great that it is impossible to perceive it as it is. And, after all, till the final stage is reached our knowledge cannot but be symbolic either.

5. *The order of worship and worshippers.*

The practices of the four paths *Gnana*, *Yoga*, *Kriya* and *Chariya* are all God's Will. The Gnani is entitled to practise in all the four paths ; the Yogi, from Yoga downwards ; the Kriyavan can practise Kriya and Chariya ; the Chariyavan is alone entitled to practise *Chariya*. So that the faultless Gnana Guru is the Guru of all the Margis. He is God Himself. Worship Him accordingly.

ADHIKARANA, 4.

6. *The necessity of a Guru.*

By means of Mantras, medicines, Yoga practices, and herbs and medicinal stones, and other such means as are set forth in the Tantras, one can secure the knowledge of the Vedas and the Shastras, knowledge of past, present and future, and the endless occult powers. But the knowledge of God can only be secured by the grace of the Guru, and not by any other means. Even the above-mentioned powers can be secured by the Guru's grace.

7. *The different ways of Grace by the Guru.*

பரப்பிரம மிவனென்றும் பரமசிவன்று னென்றும் பர
ஞான மிவனென்றும் பராபரன் றனென்றும், அரன்றருசீர்
நிலை யெல்லா மிவனே யென்று மருட்குருவை வழிபடவே
யவனி வன்றனையே, யிரங்கிய வாரண மாமை மீனண்டஞ்
சினையை யியல்பினொடும் பரிசித்து நினைந்தும் பார்த்தும்,
பரிந்தவைதானாக்கு மாபோற் சிவமேயாக்கும் பரிசித்தும்
சிந்தித்தும் பார்த்துந்தானே.

If one does worship his gracious Guru, as the Para-Brahmam, as Para-Sivam, and Para-Gnana, and as all the manifestations of Hara, then Guru becoming God Himself will convert the disciple into His Form by means of touch, thought and sight, in the same way as the fowl and tortoise and fish hatch their eggs by touch and thought and sight respectively.

The End.

May the grace of Arul Nandhi descend on all!

J. M. N.

Some Recent Tamil Books.

Students of Tamil Literature ought to feel grateful to Mr. P. Krishnasawmy Mudaliar of Komaleswaranpet for the excellent and scholarly edition in four volumes of Periyapuranam (பெரியபுராணம்) with annotations and commentary, which he has brought out at considerable labour and expense. The notes and commentary are very helpful and luminous and bear witness to the clear thought and mature scholorship of the commentator, Arumuga Thambiran Swamigal; while the text itself is carefully revised and the introduction is full of interesting information. Periyapuranam contains the life-stories of 'the great ones' of Saivism, the Saivite saints of Southern India which is the cradle, the nurture ground and the home of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. The lines are put in exquisite Tamil verse breathing a chaste vigour and spiritual force which is all its own, by the poet Sekkilar, who lived in the time of Anabâya Chola and was for many years the minister in chief to that pious ruler and noble patron of Tamil learning. This puranam forms the twelfth and the last of the Saiva Thirumurrai (or the Saivite Devotional works). The work deserves careful study by all students of Tamil, and Mr. P. Krishnasawmy Mudaliar's Edition may be confidently recommended.

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Mr. P. Krishnasawmy Mudaliar, has also given us a copiously annotated Edition of Kumara Gurupara Swamigal's மீனாட்சியம்மன் பிள்ளைத்தமிழ், a work considered the best of its kind, containing a century of stanzas in praise of the childhood of Meenatchi Ammai, the consort of Siva, in Madura. The work is well-known among Tamil scholars for the rich diction and the high-sounding music of its verse, and contains in any philosophical truths happily expressed. The explanatory notes and comments are excellently done and assist us to understand and appreciate better the beauties of thought and expressiou that abound in the poem.

***

We owe to the enterprise of Mr. S. Sivasankara Chetty, B.A., the young proprietor of the *Ripon* Press, a faithful and accurate translation into Tamil by Mr. Kuppusawmy Raju of 'Viruththi Prabakaram' விருத்திப்பிரபாகரம் the valuable Hindi work on Vedanta Philosophy of Nichala Dasa. This author's Vichara Sagar, in its English and Tamil translations, has found many readers and is growing in popularity with students of the Vedanta. The present work ought to find equal, if not greater favour, as it contains able and lucid summaries of many schools of Hindu Philosophy, much matter that will be highly prized on the subject of the Grounds of Proof (Pramâna), and a 'though deep, yet clear' exposition of the philosophy of the Vedanta system. The Translation of விருத்திப்பிரபாகம் is a noteworthy addition to Tamil Vedanta literature, and should find a place in the library of every Tamil Student of Sankara's philosophy.

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